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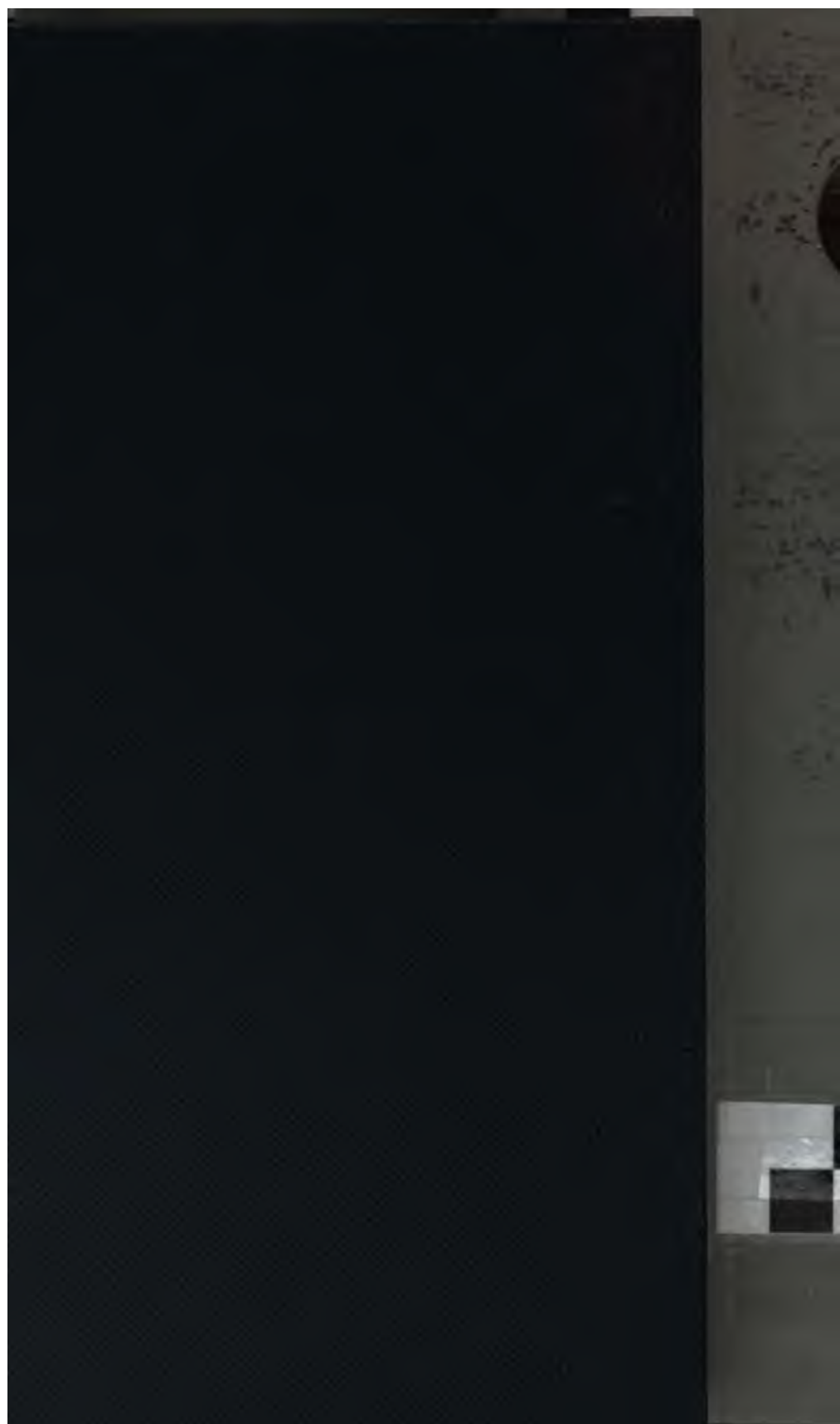
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GREAT MEN AT PLAY

GREAT MEN AT PLAY



BY
T. F. THISELTON DYER
/

TWO VOLUMES

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GREAT men, from the very fact of their pre-eminence, have, at all times, aroused in the public mind a curiosity for details about their habits, and peculiarities when out of harness. In a variety of cases, their biographies prove how entirely opposite

has been their private life to what one would have expected, judging from their behaviour before the world. But, as it has been often observed, a man in his public capacity and in his private life is two distinct beings. In the one case he is like an actor, ever conscious of the public gaze upon him; in the latter he assumes his own natural individuality, untrammelled by that conventional appearance, which the prominence of his position demands. Thus, many of our leading men who have appeared bright, and full of spirits, in their public life, have been just the reverse in their homes.

J. P. Curran was a striking instance, for oftentimes, when he had "set the table in a roar" with his gibes, merriment, and flashes of wit, he was scarcely recognizable, an hour or so afterwards, as the victim of his constitutional melancholy. At such times it was impossible to cheer him, and, in the solitude of the darkness, he would even wander at midnight in his garden. It was his misfortune also to lose his favourite little daughter, who had been a sort of musical prodigy. He had her buried in a small grove adjoining his garden, and often, we are told—as the tears chased each other down his cheeks—he would point to his child's monument, and "wish to be with her and at rest." This was a strange

contrast, and one which was as painful for others to see, as for himself to bear. Perhaps, however, after one of these distressing scenes, when he had wept himself tearless, some trifling incident on his return home would recall past memories and "hurry him into the very extreme of cheerfulness!" "His spirits," says his biographer,* "rose, his wit returned, the jest, and the tale, and the anecdote, pushed each other aside in an almost endless variety, and day dawned upon him the happiest, the pleasantest, and the most fascinating of companions."

At one period of his life John Stuart Mill† suffered from severe mental depression. It was in the year 1826, when in this frame of mind, that he put this question to himself:—"Suppose that all your objects in life were realized, that all the changes in institutions, and opinions, which you are looking forward to, could be completely effected at this very instant, would this be a great joy and happiness to you?" And an irrepressible self-consciousness distinctly answered, "No!" At this, he tells us, his heart sank within him; the whole foundation on which his life was constructed fell down; there seemed nothing left to live for. His life, in short, was

* "Curran and his Contemporaries," by C. Phillips, 1850, p. 343-5.

† "Autobiography," p. 134-141.

what Coleridge has described in his "Dejection":

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,
A drowsy, stifled, unimpassioned grief,
Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
In word, or sigh, or tear.

But, happily, this crisis, in his mental history, was to pass away, and in a manner he little expected. "I was reading, accidentally," he says, "'Marmontel's Memoires,' and came to the passage which relates his father's death, the distressed position of the family, and the sudden inspiration by which he, then a mere boy, felt, and made them feel that he would be everything to them. A vivid conception of the scene and its feelings came over me, and I was moved to tears. From this moment my burden grew lighter. There was once more excitement in exerting myself for my opinions and for the public good." He adds that, although he had several relapses, he was never again so miserable as he had been.

His mention of Coleridge reminds us of the poet's habitually dejected frame of mind, aggravated, as it was, by the pressure of severe bodily infirmities. According to his ill-adjusted mode of reasoning, life had no sunshine for him, however great its joys for others, and all his efforts to systematize the science of psychology in its connection with religion, poetry, and the social life

of man, seemed hopelessly destined to failure. It was this state of feeling, which ever grew wearied and impatient at ill-success, that prompted him to write those pathetic and beautiful lines on "Melancholy," which must ever rank amongst his sweetest effusions —

All Nature seems at work. Slugs leave their lair,
The bees are stirring, birds upon the wing,
And winter, slumbering in the open air,
Wears on his smiling face a dream of spring.
And I, the while, the sole unbusied thing,
Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing.

Yet well I ken the haunts where amaranths blow,
Have traced the fount whence streams of nectar flow :
Bloom, O, ye amaranths ! bloom for whom ye may !
For me ye bloom not ! glide, rich streams, away.
With lip unbrightened, wreathless brow, I stroll,
And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul ?
Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve,
And hope without an object cannot live.

The story, again, of Cowper's dejection, and despondency, is well known. When he was twenty-one, and paying court to his fair cousin in Southampton Row, he was mortified at being disfigured by an obstinate eruption which broke out upon his face. After seeking relief in various remedies, but in vain, he consulted a quack, who, in clearing his skin of the humour, drove the disease inwards. The effect produced a terrible dejection of spirits, and, to quote his own words,

"Day and night I was upon the rack, lying down in horror, and rising up in despair," a condition which lasted a year. But, although he recovered, his mind at intervals became so thoroughly unhinged as to lead him to contemplate the most desperate acts—even suicide. It was during one of these attacks that he was watched and cared for by Mrs. Unwin, with a constancy and affection which it was the great business of his life to repay.

On his recovery in 1780 he began to write for the public, "with a view of diverting his own melancholy, and doing service to the cause of morality," alluding to which he thus writes in a letter to his cousin:—"Dejection of spirits, which I suppose may have prevented many a man from becoming an author, made me one. I find constant employment necessary, and therefore take care to be constantly employed. Manual engagements do not engage the mind sufficiently, as I know by experience, having tried many. I write, therefore, generally three hours in a morning, and, in an evening, I transcribe." But, without entering more minutely into the poet's sufferings, we can only sum up his life as a prey to those mysterious workings of his mind which made him the slave of the most agonizing, and morbid, fears. It was a sad and chequered career, full of the same melancholia even to the last, for when his physician,

attending him for dropsy, asked him how he felt, he replied: "Feel! I feel unutterable despair." Such despair he continued to feel so long as he remained conscious, expiring on the 25th April, 1800, to wake up from his delusion, let us hope, in a happier world.

Charles Lamb,* although he was frequently merry, yet was given at times to despondency, and ever at the back of his merriment there reposed "a grave depth, in which rich colours, and tender lights, were inlaid, for his jests sprang from his sensibility, which was as open to pleasure as to pain." This sensibility, we are further told, "if it somewhat impaired his vigour, led him into curious and delicate fancies, and taught him a liking for things of the highest relish, which a mere robust jester never tastes."

The strange fits of abstraction and gloominess which overshadowed Chatterton's life have long explained that abnormal state of mind which rendered him peculiar, and eventually ended in that fatal resolution which robbed the world of one who, whatever his faults, was undoubtedly a genius. Whether his mind, according to Southey, "brought with it into the world a taint of hereditary insanity," is an open question, but anyhow the peculiarities which marked his life throughout

* Memoir of, by Barry Cornwall.

will ever suggest the nicest of psychological inquiries. Such cases, too, of despondency, frequent as they have been, must ever attract our sympathy, darkening many a life which otherwise might have been in every way brilliant.

From early youth Lord Clive was subject to fits of strange melancholy, which prompted him more than once to destroy himself. His active spirit, while occupied with Indian affairs, bore up manfully against his constitutional misery, but, when in an inactive situation, it "drooped and withered like a plant in an uncongenial air."* But to the last, it is said, his genius oftentimes flashed through the gloom, and occasionally, after sitting silent and torpid for hours, he would rouse himself to the discussion of some great question, would display in full force all the vigour of the soldier, and the statesman, and would then sink back into his melancholy repose. But many men, in addition to Lord Clive, have felt the effects either of inaction, or loss of influence.

When Lord Melbourne,† in his declining years, realized that his political power was no longer what it once was, he was more or less subject to mental depression. It is true that he could still be "versatile and charming at table, still pleasant,

* See *Quarterly Review*, 1840, 360.

† *Memoirs of*, by W. M. Torrens, 1878, ii., 378.

satirical, or gossiping in *tête-à-tête*, but, in the lengthening intervals of solitude, the chilly gloom came back, ever chillier and gloomier"—

Then all was blank, and bleak, and grey,
It was not night, it was not day,
But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness without a place—
A silence and a stirless breath,
That neither was of life or death,
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless.

But such is the cost of all popularity. We are further told how one who "truly and unutterably loved him, found him in the afternoon looking more than usually dejected. 'I am glad,' he exclaimed, 'you are come. I have sat here watching that timepiece, and heard it strike four times without seeing the face of a human being, and had it struck the fifth I feel that I could not have borne it.' Then after a little while the solace of gentle and wise companionship appeared to still the aching consciousness that had almost demented him; his equanimity returned, something like cheerfulness; and, for the residue of that day, he was content, and bright, and calm again."*

Sir Samuel Romilly's character, when young, was marked by a strong disposition to melancholy, which, at one time in his early life, took the

* *Ibid.*, 392.

turn of a terrible dread and apprehension of his father's death, which, judging from his own words, must have been almost monomaniac: "The idea of my father's approaching death pursued me even in the midst of scenes which seemed most likely to dispel such gloomy reflections. I remember once accompanying him to the theatre on a night when Garrick acted. The play was *Zara*, and it was followed by the farce of *Lethe*. The inimitable powers of acting, which were displayed by that admirable performer, in both these pieces could not for a moment drive from my mind the dismal idea which haunted me. In the aged Lusignan I saw what my father in a few years would be—tottering on the brink of the grave—and when in the farce the old man desires to drink the waters of *Lethe* that he may forget how old he is, I thought that the same idea must naturally present itself to my father, that he must see as clearly as I did that his death could not be at the distance of many years; and that, notwithstanding his apparent cheerfulness, that idea must often prey upon his mind and poison his happiness more, even, than it did mine." Indications of the same depression, and despondency, were not wanting in after years. His close application to study proved injurious to his health, and his description of his visit to Bath, where he

was advised to drink the waters, is painful: "I drank too much of the water, and I found myself in a much worse state than that in which I had left town. Any exertion of body, or mind, produced the most distressing palpitation of my heart. My nights were sleepless, my days restless and agitated. My apprehensions of the future were most gloomy. Having heard at Bath of persons who had never recovered from the relaxed, and nervous, habit into which an imtemperate use of the hot bath had reduced them, I persuaded myself that such was my destination. I imagined that my whole life (and I feared it might be a long one) would drag on in my then state, useless to all mankind, and burdensome to myself; and I entertained strong apprehensions that my disorder may end in madness."

How groundless were these feelings of melancholy the active and important career eventually proved, and, as we are told in his memoir, "Although his natural disposition was not without a tinge of melancholy, this ceased at the moment of his marriage, and only left that serious turn of mind which gave weight to all his thoughts." At the same time we cannot but trace the closing catastrophe of his life to this tendency of morbid melancholy, which lay dormant until rekindled by mental strain.

It must not be supposed that this mental peculiarity has been specially confined to any one class of men, instances occurring in the lives of those whose high intellectual attainments have led them in the most diversified, and opposite, pursuits. How far brain-work, and intense application, have aggravated this painful state is a question for the psychologist to determine, added to which might be included undue chronic excitement from hope of success, or fear of failure. Johnson, whose sparkling wit, and jocosé laughter, were the life and soul of the society in which he moved, had, nevertheless, his frequent fits of morbid melancholy, which "darkened the brightness of his fancy, and gave a gloomy cast to his whole course of thinking." Indeed, it was an axiom of his that the pains, and miseries, of human life outweigh its happiness and good; and, speaking of himself, he was often heard to lament that he inherited from his father a morbid disposition both of body and mind—an oppressive melancholy which robbed him of the common enjoyments of life.

Charles Mathews suffered in the same way, and Sir Walter Scott, in a letter to his daughter-in-law, says of him: "It is very odd; he is often subject to fits of melancholy." But the world, as is often the case, was deceived by the merry

laugh which really at times was the veil to conceal his hidden thoughts. Who would have imagined too, that Charles Lever, whose unflagging enjoyment of life, and genial intercourse, with his fellow creatures, had long made him a social attraction, would one day sink into deep depression? Yet it was so—a malady which was intensified by his want of sleep.

Disappointment was the cause of much of Gay's depression and melancholy, and although success and popularity were permitted him, yet neither these, nor the kindness of his friends, could relieve his mind; and some idea of his final wretched condition may be gathered from a well-known letter, written about a month before his decease, wherein he says: "I begin to look upon myself as one already dead, and desire, my dear Mr. Pope, whom I love as my own soul, if you survive me, as you certainly will, if a stone should mark the place of my grave, see these words put upon it —

"Life is a jest, and all things show it;
I thought so once, but now I know it."*

But, as Mr. Austin Dobson has remarked, his depression and despondency were "probably the result of his inactive life, and his uncertain health." Smollett, again, was of a despondent turn of mind; and Burns was at times liable to

* "Memoir of Gay," xxxv.

fits of melancholy, as also was Swift. It was said, too, of Lord Chancellor Bathurst that "no one could be merry where he was," and even the Duke of Wellington was subject now and then to despondency. In such moments, of which the world knew little, he was heard to say, "There is nothing in this world worth living for." Thus, however successful he might be in great affairs, he, like other men, was not allowed to pass through life without his share of trial, one reason for his despondency, it is said, having been that he was ill-matched in his domestic relations. Be this as it may, it is generally admitted that "the Duke's home, properly so called, was never a sunny one."*

As a young man Thomas Carlyle was given to despondency, in illustration of which we subjoin an extract from a letter, written on December 31st, 1823 : † "The year is closing. This time eight-and-thirty years I was a child of three weeks old, sleeping in my mother's bosom.

"Oh ! little did my mither think,
That day she cradled me,
The lands that I should travel in,
The death I was to dee.

Another hour, and 1823 is with the years beyond the flood. What have I done to mark the course

* Life of, by L. Gleig, 1860, iv., 85.

† Life of, by J. A. Froude, i., 199.

of it? Suffered the pangs of Tophet almost daily; grown sicker and sicker; alienated by my misery certain of my friends, and worn out from my own mind a few remaining capabilities of enjoyment; reduced my world a little nearer to the condition of a bare, rugged desert, where peace and rest for me is none. Hopeful youth, Mr. C. —! Another year or two, and it will do. Another year or two, and thou wilt wholly be—this *caput mortuum* of thy former self; a creature ignorant, stupid, peevish, disappointed, broken-hearted, the veriest wretch upon the surface of the globe. My curse seems deeper and blacker than that of any man; to be immured in a rotten carcass, every avenue of which is changed into an inlet of pain, till my intellect is obscured and weakened, and my head and heart are alike desolate and dark. How have I deserved this?”

There can be no doubt, as Mr. Froude remarks, that Carlyle suffered, and perhaps excessively, but at the same time he was “the least patient of the common woes of humanity. Nature had given him a constitution of unusual strength,” but, unfortunately, he saw his ailments at times “through the lens of his imagination—so magnified as to seem to him to be something supernatural.”

A curious mixture of character was Samuel

Foote, for he would suddenly fall from the height of mirth to the lowest note of "moping, musing melancholy." Then he would burst into a flood of tears, exclaiming that his "follies had made him many enemies, and his extravagance would bring him to a workhouse." But these seemed to be mere momentary fits of despondency, as the first object of ridicule which presented itself he instantly seized, and with a spring of fancy that seemed to rebound in proportion as it had been compressed, he again blazed out in all his meridian brightness.*

Among further instances of this melancholy temperament might be mentioned Byron, to which we find numerous allusions in his correspondence and journals. "People have wondered," he relates, "at the melancholy which runs through my writings. Others have wondered at my personal gaiety. But I recollect once, after an hour in which I had been sincerely and particularly gay, and rather brilliant, in company, my wife, replying to me, when I said (upon my remarking my high spirits) —

" 'And yet, Bell, I have been called and mis-called melancholy—you must have seen how falsely—frequently.' "

" 'No, Byron,' she answered, 'it is not so; at heart you are the most melancholy of mankind, and often when apparently gayest.' "

* See Cooke's *Memoirs* of, ii., 8.

Sir Walter Scott, too, tells us that "the flashes of mirth, gaiety, indignation, or satirical dislike which frequently animated Lord Byron's countenance might, during an evening's conversation, be mistaken by a stranger for its habitual expression, so easily and so happily was it formed for them all; but those who had an opportunity of studying his features for a length of time, both of rest and emotion, will agree with us that their proper language was that of melancholy."

Henry Martyn, again, had his fits of gloom, and Bishop Warburton speaks of himself to Doddridge as being of "a melancholy habit," which, with the distractions of life, often impelled him "to seek refuge from the uneasiness of thought in mild and desultory reading." But this habitual melancholy, it has been said, resulted from the activity of his thoughts, which often exhausted and depressed his powers, and forced him to look for relief in a change of pursuit.

Like most men, too, of high spirits, Sir Charles Barry was subject to periods of depression, "which told more on his constitution than any amount of labour," in which respect he was not unlike the celebrated engineer, James Watt, who, of a melancholic temperament, was apt at times to give way to depression.

Some men, again, have been noted for their

retiring and modest nature, one of these being notably Jeremy Bentham. His bashfulness, we are told, clung to him through life like a cold garment, and "that there never was a man so desirous of shunning others, unless some strong sense of duty subdued his natural tendency to seclusion."

An amusing anecdote is told of Christopher Smart, who was noted for his extreme bashfulness:—Having undertaken to introduce his wife to Lord Darlington, with whom he was well acquainted, he had no sooner mentioned her name to his lordship than he suddenly retired, as if stricken with pain, from the room, and from the house, leaving her to follow overwhelmed with confusion.

Robert Southey, in addition to his reserved manner and acutely sensitive mind, had a constitutional bashfulness, which, added to his retired life and the nature of his pursuits, prevented him from knowing anything of the persons among whom he lived. This, occasionally, he regretted, and, after slightly returning the salutation of some passer-by, he would again mechanically lift his cap as he heard some well-known name in reply to his inquiries, and look back with regret that the greeting had not been more cordial.*

* Life and Correspondence of, 1850, vi., 13

But perhaps one of the most extraordinary cases of shyness, and which virtually bordered on disease, was that of the Hon. Henry Cavendish. When looked at, or even addressed, by a stranger he would dart away as if hurt, and even when friends were present, any attempt to draw him into conversation would generally fail. According to Dr. Wollaston, the best way of talking to him was "never to look at him, but to talk as if it were into a vacancy," and by this means one might "set him going." At the service of Sir Joseph Banks he would stand for a long time on the landing afraid to face the company. On one occasion he was introduced to an Austrian, who complimented him by saying that his chief reason in visiting London was to see, and converse with, one of the greatest ornaments of the age, and one of the most illustrious philosophers. Cavendish, however, stood with his eyes cast down, perfectly silent, betraying every mark of distress and confusion. At length, spying an opening in the circle, he darted through it, and with all speed escaped to his carriage, and drove home.

But his shyness was more distressing still when women were concerned, and even his housekeeper had to receive his orders by notes deposited on the hall table, and, should one of his female servants accidentally cross his path, she was instantly dis-

missed. That he was not completely, however, destitute of feeling towards the fair sex was proved by his rescuing a lady one day when pursued by a mad cow. But happily, for their peace of mind, few men have been the unfortunate victims of such an eccentric peculiarity.

Sydney Smith, who owned to having been shy, has left the following anecdote. When conversing with a friend on one occasion, he remarked —

“I see you will not believe it; but I was once very shy.”

“Were you indeed, Mr. Smith? How did you cure yourself?”

“Why, it was not very long before I made two very useful discoveries; first, that all mankind were not solely employed in observing me (a belief that all young people have); and next, that shamming was of no use; that the world was very clear-sighted, and soon estimated a man at his right value. This cured me.”

On another occasion, noticing a young lady crumbling her bread, he said —

“I see you are afraid of me, you crumble your bread. It is a great proof of shyness to crumble bread at dinner. I do it when I sit by the Bishop of London, and with both hands when I sit by the Archbishop.”

Addison was excessively modest, and this,

coupled with a peculiar timidity, prevented him from exhibiting his talents to the best advantage. Brilliant as his conversational powers were, they were rarely displayed to crowds or to strangers. As soon as he entered a large company, as soon as he saw an unknown face, his lips were sealed, and his manner became constrained. Consequently those who only met him in public would have scarcely realized that he was the same man who had often kept his friends listening, and laughing, round the table from the time when the play ended till the clock of St. Paul's, in Covent Garden, struck four. It has been suggested, however, that to the very timidity, which his friends lamented, Addison owed much of his popularity, for it averted that envy which would otherwise have been excited by fame so splendid, and by so rapid an elevation.* When once he forgot himself, and was thoroughly master of his feelings, it has been generally acknowledged that his conversation was superior even to his writings, but of this we have spoken elsewhere.

A man whose virtues were once the household words on the lips of every Englishman was John, Marquis of Granby, his head having been the distinguishing sign of half the taverns in the kingdom. Horace Walpole, who has left us an

* See *Edinburgh Review*, lxxxviii., 223-4.

interesting sketch of his peculiarities, says that "his courage and tenderness were never dis-united. He was dauntless on every occasion, but, when it was necessary to surmount his bashfulness, his nerves trembled like a woman's. When it was requisite that he should speak in public, his modesty was incapable of ostentation. His rank, his services, and the idolatry of the people could inspire him with no pride—a sensation his nature knew not." As for his personal characteristics, it is not surprising, therefore, that he was the object of popular favour.

Although Charles James Fox was fond of popularity, and public favour, yet his modesty, curious to say, was almost excessive. When the entire audience of the first theatre in Paris rose to do him honour, he shrank, we are told,* from acknowledging the compliment with the diffidence of a girl. Rogers, in his "Recollections," tells us that he was very shy, and disliked being stared at, and adds: "Windham and I accompanied him one night to Vauxhall, when he was much amazed by being followed about as a spectacle from place to place. On such occasions he was not only shy, but *gauche*." Once more, Madame de Recamier, the greatest beauty of her

* "The Opposition under George the Third," W. F. Rae, 443.

day, had much difficulty in persuading him to take a drive with her in order that the Parisians might see the distinguished Englishman who divided with her the admiration of the hour.

The Marquis of Rockingham, who was Prime Minister at the commencement of George III.'s reign, was noted for his timid, and embarrassed, manner, which he was unable to shake off when addressing Parliament. Even after he had become Prime Minister, for the second time, he never rose to speak in the House of Lords without a feeling of nervous distress. Thus, on one occasion, the King wrote to him in allusion to his nervous modesty: "I am much pleased that the Opposition has forced you to hear your own voice, which, I hope, will encourage you to stand forth in other debates."

At another time Lord Gower is said to have asked Lord Sandwich, "How could he worry the poor dumb thing so," while the timid Premier was still wincing under the raillery of the latter nobleman.*

The late Duke of Portland carried his shyness to such an extent that in his later years he would scarcely see anyone except a few of his old domestics. His subterranean buildings at Welbeck Abbey are proverbial, being of their kind,

* Jesse's "Celebrated Etonians," ii., 224.

perhaps, the most costly buildings in the country. In order to shelter himself from the sight of any one, who might happen to pass through the park, he hid himself under a large umbrella which he always carried with him for the purpose. At his town residence, in Cavendish Square, he had the wall at the back raised to such a height that it absolutely precluded his neighbours from overlooking either himself, or his mansion.

One marked feature of Hazlitt's character was his painful bashfulness when in company with persons with whom he was not familiar. But, when he became entirely at his ease, and entered on a favourite topic, no conversation was ever more charming or delightful. At the same time it must be acknowledged that this peculiarity was made at variance with the rest of his conduct.

Again, Abernethy, the eminent surgeon of the last century, was noted for his peculiar diffidence and unconquerable shyness when about to open his lectures. Oftentimes, before commencing, he would leave the theatre for a time to collect himself sufficiently to begin his discourse. On these occasions, too, a tumult of applause seemed only to increase the difficulty; but, when once the lecture had begun, he displayed no greater evidence of embarrassment. There was no sign

of this modesty in the course of his practice, throughout which he never hesitated to show at all times an intrepid independence, utterly heedless as to whether he gave offence thereby or not. One recorded proof of this was his refusing to attend George IV. until he had delivered his lecture at the hospital, an act which forfeited him his royal appointment.

On another occasion he caused great offence by refusing to see a certain Peer out of his turn. On the latter entering his consulting-room he indignantly asked Abernethy if he knew who he was, whereupon Abernethy, it is said, replied —

“I, sir, am John Abernethy, surgeon, and, if you wish to consult me, I am now ready to hear what you have to say in your turn.”

It is curious that a man of this stamp should have known the meaning of modesty, much less felt its painful feeling.

Leech, both as a man and an artist, was singularly modest, while Sir Gilbert Scott, in addition to his unassumingness of manner, was eminently so. A great mind like that of Frederick Denison Maurice was not altogether exempt from the same peculiarity. “If visitors,” writes his son, “called on him or were staying with him, who differed from him in points of opinion, his reticence in explaining, urging, or

enforcing any opinions of his own, unless he was almost forced to speak out, was always marked. No doubt his shyness was partly the cause, but much more than this, the dread of trying merely to substitute his opinions for others."

But, passing on to some of the many other peculiarities of our eminent men, may be mentioned that of Haydon, who was in the habit of sitting in a darkened room, but, considering how strange a life his was in many ways, we cannot be surprised at any of his eccentricities, for there seems to "have existed from the first that disproportion in the structure of his mind which tends to eventual insanity."* Further, it has been remarked, his whole life was "a series of delusions, follies, eccentricities, and inconsistency of wild talents, mistaken and misapplied." Unfortunately, too, he was inordinately vain, and this "blinded him throughout to the quality of his own works and the amount of influence he could wield."† And yet, at the same time, it must not be forgotten that, in spite of his many peculiarities and failings, there were not wanting certain compensating qualities in his life deserving of praise. Norman Macleod, who usually devoted the morning to hard study, carried it on

* See *Edinburgh Review*, xcvi., 519; *Quarterly Review*, xciii., 558.

† Life of, by Tom Taylor, 1853, iii., 355.

in a room darkened so as to prevent distraction from outside objects.

Thackeray, again, and several of our literary men, have been acutely sensible of sound. Babbage wrote many a letter to *The Times* to denounce the jangling inharmonious sounds of street music; and poor Carlyle was so disturbed even by cock-crowing that he actually had built an iron room at the top of his house at Chelsea, where he could shut himself up and find seclusion, both mentally and bodily, from the incessant tormenting sounds which from one quarter or another must ever, in a great city, make themselves heard. Then, too, there was Leech, whose smart invectives against the street organ-grinders form some of the most laughable and clever caricatures in by gone volumes of *Punch*. Indeed, it has been often remarked that to a highly sensitive mind there is, perhaps, no greater friction than the monotonous noises of street-life.

Some men have possessed the happy peculiarity of being able to sleep at odd moments, and thus economize their capacity for work. Pitt could do so whenever he had an opportunity; and when an attack was made by an antagonist on Lord North, who had the same happy knack of sleeping, a member, thinking he was dozing, exclaimed —

“The Premier is asleep.”

"Not so," said the First Lord, "but I wish to heaven I were."

Selwyn had the faculty of sleeping, and if he was not dozing in the House of Commons he was generally thought to be slumbering elsewhere. *Apropos* of this habit, which often caused the House much amusement, the following anecdote is related:—

At the time when Burke was wearying his hearers by those long speeches, which obtained for him the name of the "Dinner-bell," a nobleman happened to enter the House just as Selwyn was quitting it.

"Is the House up?" was the inquiry.

"No," replied Selwyn, "but Burke is."

At one or other of his Clubs, "when the largeness of the stakes for which he was gambling," writes Eliot Warburton,* "did not in the least diminish his lethargy, he was almost sure to be found engaged in all the duties of the card-table, with closed eyes and apparently weary limbs." Once more, in "Walpole's Letters,"† we find this anecdote: "You will believe when I tell you that t'other night, having lost eight hundred pounds at hazard, he fell asleep upon the table with near half as much before him, and slept for three hours

* "Horace Walpole and his Contemporaries," ii., 105.

† Vol. iii., 83.

with everybody stamping the box close to his ear." In the same way Lord Palmerston snatched in the House of Commons an occasional nap, and, hence, was nicknamed "the Great Sleeper."

Lord Westbury had the habit of obtaining rest at odd moments, and, as it seemed, almost at pleasure. When in Parliament, and not wanted in the House, he would sit in the library reading his briefs with an attention wholly absorbed. Occasionally "while thus occupied he would drop off to sleep, and after a brief interval awake, and without apparent effort resume his work with the same art of diligent study.*

On the other hand, Smollett and Cowper suffered from sleeplessness, as also did John Leech. "A friend of mine," remarked Erskine, one day, "was suffering from a continual wakefulness, and various methods were tried to send him to sleep, but in vain. At last his physicians resorted to an experiment which succeeded perfectly; they dressed him in a watchman's coat, put a lantern into his hand, placed him in a sentry-box, and he was asleep in ten minutes."

Undue sensitiveness is another trait of character which has occasionally been conspicuous in our great men, an anecdote illustrative of which is related of Sir Thomas Lawrence. In the year

* "Life of Lord Westbury," i. 140.

1823, while John Thurtell was in prison, charged with the murder of Mr. Weare, he expressed a wish to see him when he took his exercise in the prison yard. This request, which was refused, was misrepresented as an application to take a cast of the prisoner's face, a misstatement which found its way into the newspapers. This caused Sir Thomas Lawrence much pain; and, on his waiting upon George IV. at the palace to take a sitting for the celebrated "sofa-portrait," he was so affected and overcome that he could scarcely proceed with his work. The king, noticing his depression, inquired the cause, and sympathized with him in his sensitiveness.

Another feature of the same characteristic is that extreme and over-scrupulous courtesy, which has been seen in many great lives. The courtesy of Lord Lyndhurst was as marked in his behaviour at all times, as his learning as a lawyer, and ability as a statesman. "It probably pained him," says a writer of his memoir in the *Athenæum*, "when he was Chancellor, to be uncivil even to a Lord Mayor, as he was obliged to be according to custom. When a new Lord Mayor invites the other judges to dine with him, they bow, by way of assent, but when the same invitation is made to the Lord Chancellor, he listens, gives no sign, and the Mayor departs without an answer. Mr.

Justice Graham, again, had the reputation of being one of the most polite judges that ever adorned the bench, of whom many anecdotes have been recorded. To one found guilty of burglary, for instance, he would say, "My honest friend, you are found guilty of felony, for which it is my painful duty," etc.

Once more, in numerous cases, our eminent men have shown their peculiarities by marked, and diversified, deviations from the usual habits of society. Charles, Lord Metcalfe was noted for his remarkable coolness under sudden and imminent peril, nothing being able to disturb his self-possession. On one occasion, when sitting after dinner with his secretary in Jamaica, the shock of an earthquake was felt so severely as to throw down the decanters on the table. Amidst the general alarm occasioned by this convulsion of nature Metcalfe remained unmoved.

"My good fellow," he said calmly to his secretary, "don't be alarmed; it is only an earthquake."

A remarkable characteristic of Leigh Hunt was his coolness in danger. "I have seen him," writes his son, "in many situations calculated to try the nerves, and never saw him moved by personal fear. He had been in a carriage of which the horses ran away, and seemed only to

enjoy the rapidity of the motion. I have seen him threatened, more than once, by brutal and brawny rustics, whom he instantly approached with an animated, and convincing, remonstrance. I have seen him in a carriage nearly carried away by a flooded river, his whole anxiety being centred in one of his children, whom he thought to be more exposed than himself." On one occasion, when he was in imminent danger of being run down by two large ships that passed like vast clouds astern, the lanterns were relit and handed up by Leigh Hunt with the coolness of a practised seaman.

When any extraordinary difficulty occurred to James Brindley, writes his brother-in-law, Mr. Henshall, "in the execution of his works, having little or no assistance from books or the labours of other men, his resources lay within himself. In order, therefore, to be quiet and uninterrupted while he was in search of the necessary expedients, he generally retired to his bed, and he has been known to be there one, two, or three days, till he had attained the object in view. He would then get up and execute his design without any drawing or model." In his note-book the words "lay in bed" occasionally occur, as if to mark the period, though he does not particularize the objects of his thoughts on such occasions.*

* Smiles, "Lives of the Engineers," i., 474.

When it was necessary for the Duke of Bridgewater to see any persons about matters of business, he preferred going to them instead of letting them come to him, "for," said he, "if they come to me they may stay as long as they please; if I go to them I stay as long as I please."

The Duke of Cleveland, who for many years was known on the turf as Lord William Powlett, was remarkable for his eccentric peculiarities, one of which was his habit of pilfering. Indeed, so ingrained was this peculiarity that the heads of the firms honoured by the patronage of the noble family were tired of his curious failing, and instructed to charge in the account for anything that his lordship might purloin. But, on one occasion, he was not so lucky. He entered a shop, writes Mr. Day in his "*Reminiscences of the Turf*," and was astonished on leaving to be told that a pair of slippers was missing. These, it appears, his lordship had with much adroitness removed from the counter into his coat pocket. He protested that he had not the missing articles with much anger, and the shop-keeper, with equal wrath, demanded their return. Ultimately a policeman was sent for, and the slippers found. It was not the only case of the kind. He was a member of one of the most fashionable clubs in London, but, as on his departure after

every visit, the half-burnt candle ends were generally missing, suspicion at length fell on his lordship as having a fondness for these trifles. He was therefore watched, and being eventually caught in the act of pocketing them, was dismissed from membership, despite the excuses made for his failing.

But, although many of our eminent men have been remarkable for their peculiarities—bordering in numerous instances on eccentricity—few have indulged in such a curious idiosyncrasy as that which brought the Duke of Cleveland within the arm of the law.

CHAPTER II.

FAVOURITE DISHES.

Duke of Wellington—Sir Walter Scott—Southey—Wordsworth—Lord St. Vincent—Earl Dudley—Dr. Johnson—Chatterton—Thomas Hollis—Charles Lever—Leigh Hunt—Theodore Hooke—Byron—Lord Lyndhurst—Henry Fielding—Thackeray—Lord Northington—Oliver Goldsmith—Dr. Parr—Hon. Henry Cavendish—Addison—T. Assheton Smith—John Howard—Joseph Ritson—Adam Ferguson—Basil Montague—Sir Charles Napier—Gilbert Wakefield—J. J. Farquharson—Sir Tatton Sikes—Sydney Smith—Hazlitt—J. P. Curran—Dr. Porson—Sir Joshua Reynolds—James Bruce—Tom Moore—Swift—Lord Thurlow—Liston—Lord Eldon—Lord Stowell—Lord Ellenborough—Baron Graham—Thomas Quin—Charles Lamb—Lord Macaulay—Beau Nash—Charles Macklin—Jonas Hanway—Lord John Hervey—Dean Hook—Douglas Jerrold—Thomas Carlyle.

“To this hour,” writes Carlyle, “no public matter, with whatever serious argument, can be settled in England till it hath been dined upon, perhaps repeatedly dined upon,” and when Napoleon deputed the Abbé de Pradt to gain

Poland to his cause, his principal directions were, "*Tenez bonne table, et soignez les femmes.*" It has been much the same at all times, biography being rich in tales of this kind, and it is impossible to say how far the destinies of the human race have been influenced by the amenities of gastronomy. Thus Tom Moore despatched the Foreign Secretary and a fine turtle on a sea-voyage, in order—

To soften the heart of a *Diplomate*
Who is known to dote upon verdant fat,
And to let admiring Europe see
That *Calipasch* and *Calipee*
Are the English forms of diplomacy.

One day, when staying in Paris, the Duke of Wellington was asked to dinner by M. Cambacères, one of the most renowned *gourmets* of France. The host having pressed a *recherché* dish upon the Duke, asked eagerly, when his plate was cleared, how he liked it.

"It was excellent," replied the Duke, "but, to tell you the truth, I don't much care about what I eat."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Cambacères. "Don't care what you eat! Why, then, did you come here?"*

But the Duke's whole mode of living was simple, and in remarkable contrast with the

* See Gleig's "History of Wellington," iv., 258.

fashionable customs of his times. Many an interesting anecdote has been told of the extravagant feasting of years gone by in which our eminent men, from time to time, took part. The *menu*, for instance, of the dinner given in May, 1835, to Lord Chesterfield, on his quitting the office of Master of the Buckhounds, was a notable instance. The party consisted of thirty, the price was six guineas a-head, and the dinner was ordered by Comte d'Orsay, who stood without a rival among connoisseurs in this department of art. There is a lingering tradition, too, of a dinner at "The Albion," under the auspices of the venerable Sir William Curtis, which cost the party between thirty and forty pounds a-piece. It is related, also, how the celebrated *chef* of the Marquis of Abercorn refused to accompany the Duke of Richmond to Ireland, at a salary of four hundred pounds a year, on hearing that there was no Italian opera at Dublin.

But, although many of the most eminent men have been the most fanciful epicures, others, like Wellington, have been just the reverse. Thus, it may be remembered that Sir Walter Scott, who, great eater as he was, liked simple fare. According to Lockhart, his breakfast table was always provided—in addition to the usually

plentiful delicacies of a Scotch breakfast—with some solid article, on which he did most lusty execution—a round of beef, a pasty such as made Gil Blas's eyes water, or, most welcome of all, a cold sheep's head. At dinner he ate sparingly, the only dishes he was at all fond of, adds Lockhart, "being the old-fashioned ones to which he had been accustomed in the days of Saunders Fairford."

Southey was content with a simple joint and potato, and equally plain was Wordsworth's mode of living; while Admiral Lord St. Vincent above all things hated and despised anything like gluttony. It is said that one of his visitors once caused himself to be helped three times from the sideboard by the butler after the dish was removed from the table—a circumstance which did not escape his attention, for he was never asked again.

But, there must necessarily be great diversity of opinion on this point, for the well-known Earl Dudley was a genuine epicure, and the very opposite of those nobles who were happy in the enjoyment of the simplest food. According to his ideas, "a good soup, a small turbot, a neck of venison, duckling with green peas, or chicken with asparagus, and an apricot tart, is a dinner for an Emperor, when he cannot get better," a

statement, in truth, with which most persons will agree. His estimate, also, of the character of a certain Baron of the Exchequer is noteworthy :—

“He was a good man, sir—an excellent man. He had the best melted butter I ever tasted in my life.”

Even Dr. Johnson was much of the same way of thinking, for “some people,” as he remarked on one occasion, “have a foolish way of not minding, or pretending not to mind, what they eat. For my part, I mind my belly very studiously, and very carefully, for I look upon it that he who does not mind his belly will hardly mind anything else.” No one relished good eating more than Johnson, and when at table he was totally absorbed in the business of the moment; his looks were rivetted to his plate, nor would he, unless when in very high company, say one word, or even pay the least attention to what was said by others, till he had satisfied his appetite. If the dishes, or the cooking, were not always to his taste, he did not hesitate to descant freely on his dissatisfaction; and, one day, when much displeased with the performances of a nobleman’s French cook, he exclaimed with some warmth, “I’d throw such a rascal into the river,” and then proceeded almost to cause a fit to a

lady at whose house he was to sup by adding, "I, madam, who live at a variety of good tables, am a much better judge of cookery than any person who has a very tolerable cook, but lives much at home, for his palate is gradually adapted to the taste of his cook; whereas, madam, in trying by a wider range, I can more exquisitely judge."

According to Mrs. Piozzi his favourite dishes were a leg of pork boiled till it dropped from the bone, or veal pie with plums and sugar, or the outside cut of a salt buttock of beef. He was a great lover of fruit, often eating seven or eight peaches before breakfast, and largely indulged in tea, oftentimes drinking as many as thirty cups at a sitting. Indeed, he acknowledged himself as "a hardened and shameless tea-drinker, whose kettle has scarcely time to cool, who with tea amuses the evening, with tea solaces the mid-nights, and with tea welcomes the morning."

Like Johnson, Chatterton was a great tea-drinker, usually drinking six or seven cups. Tarrying at the table until the supply was exhausted, he would laughingly tell his god-mother, who most frequently presided there, "I'll stick to you to the last." When bidding farewell to Bristol and all his old friends he told his sister that "For all the good tea Mrs. Edkins had given

him he would, if he did well, send her as good a tea-pot and stand of silver as money could purchase."

But, in his meals, he practised an habitual self-denial, systematically avoiding whatever tended to impede the full play of the mental faculties. He would content himself with bread and water when his mother and sister indulged in the rare luxury of a hot dinner, telling them "he had a work on hand, and must not make himself more stupid than God had made him."*

Thomas Hollis was another great tea-drinker, and was somewhat eccentric in his diet, abstaining from spices or salt of any kind, in addition to butter, milk, and sugar.

But, turning to good livers, Charles Lever was certainly a *gourmet*, and with him it was quality versus quantity. To such an extent did he carry this epicurean fancy that at one time he had a first-rate man cook, part of whose duty it was to daily place by the side of his plate at breakfast (always a light meal with him) the *menu* for the evening dinner, in order that he might alter, perhaps, some *plat* or other more to his taste.

Leigh Hunt was essentially an epicure, and Theodore Hook was another free liver, his very jocose nature throwing him into the society of the convivial of his time.

* "Chatterton," by Daniel Wilson, 1869, 217.

It has been said that Horne Tooke's stomach, like that of the ostrich, seemed formed to dissolve iron. According to his biographer,* he was accustomed to swallow cucumbers, melons, and pickled salmon, in great quantities, with impunity. Roast and boiled, white meats and brown, fish either fresh or salted, pies, puddings, preserves, apples, pears, and walnuts, seemed all to be swallowed indiscriminately, without fear and without danger.

Speaking of Hooke, we may mention an odd dinner of which he partook in the West of England. The soup was a sort of veal broth. At the bottom of the table was a roast loin of veal; at the top half a calf's head. There were four *entrées*—veal patties, veal callops, calf's brains, and calf's tongue. One of the guests, who hated veal, apparently waited for the second course, when the fair hostess apologized—"We have no second course. The fact is, we killed a calf the day before yesterday, and we are such prudent managers that we make a point of eating it up while it is good, and nice, and fresh, before we begin upon anything else." This anecdote is not unlike another of a similar character:—"At the table of Lord Polkemmet, when the covers were removed, the dinner was seen to consist of

* "Life of John Horne Tooke," ii., 452-3.

veal broth, a roast fillet of veal, veal cutlets, a florentine (an excellent Scotch dish composed of veal), a calf's head, calf's foot jelly. The worthy judge, observing an expression of surprise among his guests, broke out in explanation—"Ou, ay, it's a caaf. When we kill a beast, we just eat up one side and down the tither."

Byron, it is true, would eat and drink immoderately, in the most eccentric fashion, but then, as Mr. Jeafferson has remarked, "When he was not impairing a naturally delicate constitution with protracted medicines, he ate like a greedy schoolboy."

Rogers, in his "Table Talk," gives a well-known but amusing anecdote of Byron's eccentric behaviour at dinner, to meet whom he had asked Moore and Campbell.

"When we sat down to dinner I asked Byron if he would take soup.

" 'No, he never took soup.'

" 'Would he take some fish?'

" 'No, he never took fish.'

"Presently I asked if he would eat some mutton.

" 'No, he never ate mutton.'

"I then asked if he would take a glass of wine.

" 'No, he never tasted wine.'

"It was now necessary to inquire what he *did* eat and drink, and the answer was—

"‘Nothing but hard biscuits and soda water.’

"Unfortunately neither hard biscuits nor soda water were at hand, and he dined upon potatoes bruised down on his plate and drenched with vinegar.

"But the same night," adds Rogers, "after leaving my house, Byron went to a club in St. James's Street, and ate a hearty meat supper."

Lord Lyndhurst did not despise good living, and Lord Lytton not only understood, but fully appreciated, a dinner cooked on scientific rather than haphazard principles.

According to Lady Wortley Montagu it would seem that, however great his misfortunes and hard his disappointments, Henry Fielding soon found relief by reason of his mind ever flowing with mirth, wit, and good humour. Thus his "happy constitution, even when he had with great pains half demolished it, made him forget everything when he was before a vension pasty or over a flask of champagne."

The Duke of Bridgewater rejected with a kind of antipathy all poultry, veal, and such like, designating them as "white meats," and often wondered that everybody, like himself, did not prefer the brown. But he forgot that in matters

of diet taste differs, perhaps, more than in anything else connected with life.

On one occasion, on seeing a dish of oysters that had been prepared with bread-crumbs, Thackeray observed that "He didn't see why a man should be a slave to his stomach," and though unwell, he devoured the same with gusto.

Thackeray was fond of boiled mutton, and Mr. R. H. Stoddard* relates the following little anecdote which happened during his visit to America:—

"One day, when we were to have a great dinner at the club given to him, and my wife was ill and my household disarranged, and the bell rang, and I said to him, 'I must go and carve the boiled mutton for the children, and take for granted you do not care to come,' he got up, and, with a cheery voice, said, 'I love boiled mutton and children, too, and I will dine with them,' and he did, and he was happy, and the children were happy, and our appetite for the club dinner was damaged."

With Lord Northington, on the other hand, in his early life, a leg of mutton was the ordinary dish more from necessity than choice. But after he became Lord Chancellor, and Lord Lieutenant for Hampshire, both he and his wife would often

* "Anecdote Biography," 1874, ii.

look back with pleasing recollection from the Grange, and Grosvenor Square, to the frugality of their early establishment near Bedford Row, "where a leg of mutton lasted them three days—the first day hot, the second day cold, and the third day hashed."

But speaking of mutton, an amusing anecdote is told of Oliver Goldsmith. Sitting one evening at the tavern where he was accustomed to take his supper, he called for a mutton chop, which was no sooner placed before him than a friend, near him, wondered how he could allow the waiter to put such a chop on the table.

"Stinking!" said Goldsmith. "In good truth I do not smell it."

"I never smelt anything more unpleasant in my life," answered his friend; "the fellow deserves a caning for bringing you meat unfit to eat."

"In good truth, I think so too," added Goldsmith, "but I will be less severe in my punishment."

Thereupon he called for the waiter, and insisted that he should eat the chop, threatening to knock him down with his cane if he did not immediately comply. When he had eaten half the chop, Goldsmith gave him a glass of wine, thinking that it would make the remainder of the sentence less severe.

The chop finished, Goldsmith's friend burst into

a loud fit of laughter, remarking that "the chop was as fine a one as he had ever seen in his life, and that he could not think how any man could be so great a dupe to a stroke of humour."

But Goldsmith was not to be imposed on again, and vowed never to "give credit to what his friend said again."

Dr. Parr, it has been said, was an epicure, but his tastes were not extravagant, a shoulder of mutton being his favourite dish, with the choice bits of which he would fill four plates; and then, pushing the joint unceremoniously away, observe he had had enough. For cheese he had a strong aversion, which was only equalled by his dislike for tea. When, one day, invited to partake of the latter by a lady, he uttered the following delicate compliment: "*Non possum te cum vivere, nec sine te.*" On being asked, too, for a theme on a tea-chest, he is said to have answered, with the most ready wit, "*Tu doces!*" (thou tea-chest.)

One of the many eccentricities of the Hon. Henry Cavendish, generally known by the unenviable title of the "Woman-hating Cavendish," from his antipathy to the fair sex, was the regularity with which he dined off a leg of mutton—a rule which he never broke. He rarely entertained friends, and the few guests he received were treated on all occasions to the same fare—a leg of

mutton. One day, four scientific friends were to dine with him, when his housekeeper asked him what he would like for dinner, whereupon Cavenish replied —

“A leg of mutton.”

“Sir,” said she, “that will not be enough for five.”

“Well, then, get two,” was the reply.

According to popular report, Addison's marriage with the Countess of Warwick, was a most unhappy match. The story runs that to drown his misery and escape from his termagant wife he would often slip away from Holland House to the White Horse Inn. Here he would heartily enjoy his favourite dish of fillet of veal, his bottle, and perhaps a friend. But unfortunately, the dinner over, he contracted drinking habits, which were only too often as discreditable to him as they were to his friends who kept late hours with him.

Thomas Assheton Smith, who, for exactly half a century, was a master and owner of hounds, and, by universal acknowledgment, the foremost rider of his day, was particularly abstemious in his living. As his biographer, Sir John Eardley-Wilmot, remarks,* the copious plate of hashed mutton, which was his constant breakfast before going out to hunt, “even to the last, hastily eaten

* “Reminiscences,” 1860, 159.

while his horse was at the door, and digested in the saddle, was a proof how well he was able to set all rules of diet at defiance. Unlike the more careful and no less celebrated Meynell, whose hunting breakfast was a pound of the best veal condensed to as much soup as would fill a small tea-cup." In his younger days, relates an old friend who saw a good deal of him at that period, his usual dinner was mutton soup of the best description, and a couple of glasses of claret. "I once rode with him to Hungerford," he adds, "in a bitter cold frost, and our luncheon was tea and toast."

But the same abstemiousness of living has not been confined to any one class of great men. Thus, John Howard, the eminent philanthropist, discarded everything in the shape of indulgence, including animal food, and fermented liquors of every kind. Tea, milk, butter, cheese, fruit and vegetables were his greatest luxuries, but these were enjoyed in very moderate quantities, and with perfect indifference as to the times at which they were taken. As his friend Dr. Aikin observed, "he found his wants supplied in almost every place where man existed, and was as well provided in the *posadas* of Spain and *caravanseras* of Turkey as in the inns, and hotels, of England and France."

Another abstainer from animal food was Joseph Ritson. A singular feature of his life is fully described in his "Essay on Abstinence from Animal Food as a Moral Duty" (1802), wherein he thus writes: "The compiler himself, induced to serious reflection by the perusal of Mandeville's 'Fable of the Bees,' in the year 1772, being the 19th year of his age [desisted from animal food], and has since, to the revisal of this sheet, firmly adhered to a milk and vegetable diet, having, at least, never tasted during the whole course of those thirty years a morsel of flesh, fish, or fowl, or anything to his knowledge prepared in, or with, those substances, or any extract thereof, unless on one occasion, when tempted by wet, cold and hunger, in the south of Scotland, he ventured to eat a few potatoes; nothing less repugnant to his feelings being to be had, unless it may be in eating eggs, which, however, deprives no animal of life, though it may prevent some from coming into the world to be murdered, and devoured by others."

Ritson's peculiarity suggested the following lampoon in the *St. James's Chronicle* (June 3, 1783):—

THE PYTHAGOREAN CRITICK.

By wise Pythagoras taught, young R—s—n's meals
With bloody viands never are defil'd;
For quadruped, for bird, for fish, he feels:
His board ne'er smokes with roast meat, or with boil'd.

In this one instance, pious, mild, and tame,
He's surely in another a great sinner :
For man, cries R—s—n, man's alone my game !
On him I make a most delicious dinner.
To ven'son and to partridge I've no goût ;
To W—st—n Tom such dainties I resign :
Give me plump St—v—ns, and large J—hns—n, too,
And take your turkey and your savoury chine.

Adam Ferguson, writes Sir Walter Scott, on recovering from a paralytic stroke in the sixtieth year of his life, became a strict pythagorean in his diet, eating nothing but vegetables, and drinking only water or milk. Lord Cockburn, speaking of him in the "Memorials of his Time," says: "I never heard of his dining out, except at his relation, Dr. Joseph Black's, where his son, Sir Adam (the friend of Scott), used to remark that it was delightful to see the two philosophers rioting over a boiled turnip." Basil Montague, the son of Lord Sandwich, by Miss Ray, would often abstain from animal food, and John Wesley for many years never tasted meat of any kind. Then there was Sir Charles Napier, the hero of Meeanee, who occasionally adopted a rigid vegetarian diet; and it may be remembered that Shelley cared far more for fruit than the best cookery.

Gilbert Wakefield, the political economist and theologian, who died in the year 1801, abstained from animal food; and Dr. George Cheyne, having grown enormously stout—weighing, it is

said, thirty-two stone—adopted a milk and vegetable regimen. Owing to this change of diet he not only effected a general improvement in his health, but actually succeeded in reducing his size almost to a third.

Among the many amusing anecdotes told of James John Farquharson, the noted huntsman of the last century, may be quoted the following:—
“He was a great *bon vivant*, and specially fond of woodcocks. On one occasion George the Fourth tried a practical joke on him. Knowing his partiality for woodcocks, he caused to be sewed up a couple of owls with woodcocks’ heads attached to them, and fresh worms for the trail. But one mouthful was sufficient to tell the tale.”*

Rising with the lark in summer and before the songster in winter, Sir Tatton Sikes’ favourite breakfast was an apple tart and a heavy draught of new milk—a meal which he thoroughly enjoyed. By his simple diet and active exercise he kept his health, while from his hospitable door no one ever went away hungry or thirsty.

Sydney Smith prided himself on his salads, which were always dressed after his recipe. “I was not aware,” he one day jocularly remarked, “how much it had contributed to my reputation, till I met Lady ——, at Bowood, who begged to

* *Baily's Magazine*, 1866, 116.

be introduced to me, saying she had so long wished to know me. I was, of course, highly flattered, till she added, 'For, Mr. Smith, I have heard so much of your recipe for salads, that I was most anxious to obtain it from you.' Such, and so various, are the sources of fame!" The following is the recipe as put into verse by Sydney Smith:—

To make this condiment, your poet begs
The pounded yellow of two hard boil'd eggs;
Two boil'd potatoes, pass'd through kitchen sieve,
Smoothness and softness to the salad give;
Let onion atoms lurk within the bowl,
And, half-suspected, animate the whole.
Of mordant mustard add a single spoon,
Distrust the condiment that bites so soon;
But deem it not, thou man of herbs, a fault,
To add a double quantity of salt;
Four times the spoon with oil from Lucca brown,
And twice with vinegar procured from town;
And, lastly, o'er the flavoured compound toss
A magic soupçon of anchovy sauce.
Oh, green and glorious! Oh, herbaceous treat!
'Twould tempt the dying anchorite to eat.
Back to the world he'd turn his fleeting soul,
And plunge his fingers in the salad bowl.
Serenely full, the epicure would say,
Fate cannot harm me, I have dined to-day.

Thomas Manners Sutton had a peculiar love for salads, and in a moment of impulsive kindness, says Mr. Jeaffreson,* "he gave Lady Morgan the recipe for his favourite salad—a

* "A Book about Lawyers," ii., 297.

compound of rare merit, and mysterious properties." But bitterly did the old lawyer repent his unwise munificence when he read "O'Donnell." Warmly displeased with the political sentiments of the novel, he ordered it to be burnt in the servants' hall, and exclaimed previously to Lady Manners, "I wish I had not given her the secret of my salad."

Speaking of salads we are reminded of an amusing anecdote told by Mr. Frith in his "*Reminiscences*"* of Turner. "I have often heard him," he says, "ridicule some of his later works. For example, at a dinner, a salad was offered to him, whereupon he called the attention of his neighbour, Jones Lloyd, afterwards Lord Overstone, to it in the following words:—'Nice cool green that lettuce, isn't it? And the beet root pretty red—not quite strong enough. And the mixture, delicate tint of yellow that. Add some mustard, and then you have one of my pictures.'"

During a long term of years, William Hazlitt abstained from every kind of liquid, except tea and water.

According to J. G. Patmore,† "A cup of Hazlitt's tea was a peculiar thing. I have never

* i., 131.

† "My Friends and Acquaintances," ii., 312-13.

tasted anything like it. He always made it himself, half filling the tea-pot with tea, pouring the boiling water over it, and then almost immediately pouring it out, using with it a great quantity of sugar and cream. To judge from its occasional effect on myself, I should say that the quantity Hazlitt drank of this tea produced ultimately a most injurious effect upon him, and in all probability hastened his death, which took place from disease of the digestive organs."

His diet, too, was usually spare and plain, in connection with which several funny anecdotes are told. Thus one day, writes his grandson,* "My mother met him in Piccadilly, and, as he looked more out of spirits than usual, inquired if anything was the matter.

" 'Well, you know,' he answered, 'I've been having some hot boiled beef for my dinner, Kitty—a most *uncomfortable* dish.'

"Another day he had had a pheasant for dinner, when my mother saw him, and it turned out that he had been at a total loss to know what to order, and so had ordered this—pheasants that day being ten shillings a-piece in the market.

" 'Don't you think it was a good deal to give?' she asked.

" 'Well, I don't know but what it was, Kitty,'

* Memoirs of, by W. Carew Hazlitt, 1867, ii., 307-8.

he replied, opening his eyes in his way, and tucking his chin into his shirt collar."

Then there was John Philip Curran, who, however frugal his meal might be, generally found some friend to share it with him. Thus he was known to bring Grattan and others out to dine with him, when he had nothing in his larder but cold corned beef. On one occasion a good-natured guest took to the kitchen, and manufactured a dish of "bubble and squeak," which the party, assisted by plenty of good wine, pronounced to be capital. Curran's carelessness of eating reminds us of an anecdote told of Dr. Porson, who, in the selection and cooking of his food, was easily satisfied, mutton perhaps being his favourite meat. On one occasion, when he went to the Bodleian to collate a manuscript, Dr. Routh, the President of Magdalen College, who was leaving home for the long vacation, said to him at his departure—

"Make my house your home, Mr. Porson, during my absence, for my servants will have orders to be quite at your command, and to procure you whatever you please."

On his return he asked what the Professor had had during his stay, and on reading the servant's account found a fowl entered in it every day.

"What," said he, "did you provide for Mr. Porson no better than this, but oblige him to dine every day on fowl?"

"No, sir," replied the servant, "but we asked the gentleman the first day what he would have for dinner, and as he did not know very well what to order, we suggested a fowl. When we went to him about dinner any day afterwards, he always said, 'The same as yesterday,' and this was the only answer we could get from him."

Sir Joshua Reynolds used to relate an amusing anecdote of a venison feast, which would imply that he was by no means an epicure in the eyes of those who cared for the repast as such and nothing more. He tells us that he addressed his conversation to one of the company who sat next to him, but to his great surprise could not get a single word in answer, until at last his silent neighbour, turning to him, said, "Mr. Reynolds, whenever you are at a venison feast, I advise you not to speak during dinner time—as, in endeavouring to answer your questions, I have just swallowed a fine piece of the fat, entire, without tasting its flavour!"

The eminent traveller, James Bruce, was highly touchy whenever his veracity was called into question. It happened that when dining out one day at a friend's house one of the guests

observed "that it was *impossible* the natives of Abyssinia could eat raw meat." Without making any reply, he forthwith left the table, and before long returned from the kitchen with a piece of raw beefsteak, peppered and salted in the Abyssinian fashion. Placing this in front of the guest who had made, what he considered, an objectionable remark, he said —

"Sir, you will eat that, or fight me," but he preferred the former alternative.

Thereupon Bruce calmly observed, "Now, sir, you will never say again it is impossible."

Anecdotes of this kind suggest one told of Tom Moore, whose cheerful, and witty, conversation kept alive the social board. Being at dinner one day, where the absence of game was commented upon, a guest, alluding to his fascinating manner, for he kept the table in a roar, said, "Why, gentlemen, what better game would you wish than 'Moore' game, of which, I am sure you have abundance?"

Lord Thurlow was very fanciful about his fruit, and, in his later years, he would give way to ludicrous irritability if inferior grapes, or faulty peaches, were placed on his table. On one occasion, at Brighton, his annoyance at having placed before him a dish of defective wall-fruit was so great that—much to the astonishment of

Horne Tooke and other guests who happened to be present—he had the whole, of what was really a very fine dessert, thrown out of the window upon the Marine Parade.

Liston, the great comic actor, was fond of tripe. One day, when walking through Leicester Square with Mr. Miller, the theatrical bookseller, of Bow Street, he incidentally mentioned that he was going to have tripe for dinner.

“Tripe!” ejaculated Miller, “beastly stuff! How can you eat it?”

“What, sir,” replied Liston, “do you mean to say that you don’t like tripe?”

“Hum!” added Miller, “don’t talk so loud. People are staring at us.”

“I ask you, sir,” continued Liston, “do you not like tripe?”

“For mercy’s sake, hold your tongue!” cried Miller, who was afraid that a crowd would collect.

But Liston was not to be silenced, and with a loud voice said—

“Do you mean to say you don’t like tripe?”

This was too much for Miller, and, leaving Liston, he made his escape, but only to hear in still louder accents—

“There goes the man who doesn’t like tripe!”

Then there is a characteristic tale told of Swift’s

economy, which he learned from royalty. One day, Alderman Faulkner, his printer and publisher, was detained so late at the Deanery, correcting some proof-sheets, that Swift made him stay and dine. On this occasion asparagus formed one of the vegetables to which the Dean helped his guest, who, appreciating this delicacy, called upon his host a second time. But Swift, pointing to the alderman's plate, said —

“Sir, first finish what you have upon your plate.”

“What, sir, eat my stalks?”

“Aye, sir! King William always eats the stalks!”

This story was told by Faulkner to Dr. Leland, who asked —

“And, George, what, were you blockhead enough to obey?”

“Yes, doctor, and if you had dined with Dean Swift *tête-à-tête*, you would have been obliged to eat your stalks.”

One of the most amusing peculiarities of Lord Eldon was his singular fondness for liver and bacon. When asked to dinner by Sir John Leach, Master of the Rolls, he replied —

“It will give me great pleasure to dine with you, and since you are good enough to ask me to order a dish that shall test your new *chef's* powers,

I wish you'd tell your Frenchman to fry some liver and bacon for me."

But Sir John Leach thinking that he was in satire ridiculing his luxurious mode of living, replied —

"Are you laughing at me, or my cook?"

"At neither," answered Lord Eldon, "I was only ordering the dish which I enjoy beyond all other dishes."

Like his brother, Lord Stowell had his favourite dish, and one with which his intimate friends, when he dined with them, would treat him. It was a rich pie, composed of beefsteaks and layers of oysters, and certainly could boast of being homely, if not particularly aristocratic, in its appearance. But these were not the only eminent lawyers about this period who had strong predilections for particular dishes. Lord Ellenborough, for instance, was fond of lobster-sauce, and once gave expression to his feelings when he decided, in the King's Bench, that persons engaged in the lobster fishery were exempt from legal liability to impressment. Thus, his lordship inquired, with solemn pathos, "is not the lobster-fishery a fishery, and a most important fishery, of this kingdom, though carried on in shallow water? The framers of the law well knew that the produce of the deep sea, without the produce of the shallow water, would

be of comparatively small value, and intended that turbot, when placed upon our tables, should be flanked by good lobster-sauce."*

As is well known, too, his lordship had so high a respect for the culinary art that he sent to his brother (then Bishop of Chester, who was about to give a costly entertainment), a turtle, accompanied by an experienced cook, saying in a letter that he well knew there was nobody at the palace who could do justice to the turtle, and he had therefore despatched a competent person for the occasion.

Porson ate lobsters regularly three times a week for supper, usually at a shop where the cooked lobsters were made a spécialité. When pressure of work kept him in his study, his lobster suppers were regularly sent him on the usual nights, for he used to maintain that, as lobsters were the only things in the sea that lived exclusively upon water, no food was so pure as the flesh of a good lobster. Old Dr. Parr was specially fond of lobster and shrimp sauce, and with Swift lobster, also, was a favourite dish. John Wesley would often carry home a prime lobster from Billingsgate market, of which, it is said, he was a capital judge.

Then there was the famous miser, Elwes, who

* See Jeaffreson's "Book about Lawyers," ii., 297.

dearly loved his supper of lobster. On that well-known bout at whist which he played with the Duke of Northumberland, and two other well-known gamblers,—lasting for three days—he ate nothing but lobster, confining his drink to chocolate. When play was given up, and he found himself the loser of no less than a sum than eight hundred pounds, the only thing he could think of as likely to soothe his feverish brain, and intense chagrin, was “the tail of a good lobster.”

Baron Graham had a similar weakness for oysters as a preparatory whet to the appetite before dinner, and on one occasion was heard to remark, “Oysters taken before dinner are said to sharpen the appetite; but I have just consumed half-a-barrel of fine natives, and, speaking honestly, I am bound to say that I don’t feel quite so hungry as when I began.”

Another fish-lover was Thomas Quin, the comedian, who was passionately fond of John Dories, which gave rise to the following lines after his death:—

Alas poor Quin ! thy jests and stories
Are quite extinguished ; and what more is,
Where you’re gone, there’s no John Dories.

In order to eat this fish, he was in the habit of making an annual visit to Plymouth, and even attributed his last illness to his omitting to do so,

saying, "he considered them as salutary to his constitution, as herrings were to a Dutchman, and that, if he recovered, he would eat nothing else all the days of his life."

Quin thoroughly appreciated good living, as may be gathered from the following amusing lines *à propos* of his seeing the body of Duke Humphrey at St. Alban's:—

A plague on Egypt's arts, I say,
 Embalm the *dead*! on senseless clay
 Rich wines and spices waste.
 Like sturgeon or like brawn shall I,
 Bound in a precious pickle, lie,
 Which I shall never taste!
 Let me embalm the flesh of mine,
 With turtle fat, or Bordeaux wine,
 And spoil th' Egyptian trade!
 Than Humphrey's Duke more happy I,
 Embalm'd alive old Quin shall die—
 A mummy ready made!

Whilst mentioning these curious fancies for certain fish, it may be remembered that old Thomas Fuller had a similar partiality for eels, and, describing them in his "Cambridgeshire," thus writes:—"I know the *silver eels* are generally preferred, and I could wish *they loved men*, but as well as *men love them*, that I myself might be comprised within the compass of that desire. I know not whether the Italian proverb be here worth the remembering, 'Give eels without wine to your enemies.'"

According to an amusing tale of Westland Marston, when one morning calling on Charles Dillon, the manager tragedian, he found him on his knees before the fire toasting a bloater. With some pride he said —

“You see what I am doing. I don’t know anything that needs more careful cooking than a bloater. I’m first-rate at it, and, as soon as I’ve got this fellow off my fork, I’ll do another for you.”

Of Charles Lamb’s love of roast pork, we have an amusing proof in one of his “Essays of Elia,” entitled “A Dissertation upon Roast Pig.” This was a delicacy which, according to his taste, was not to be surpassed; and, referring to this dish, he used to contend, “There is no flavour comparable to that of the crisp, tawny, well-watched, not over-roasted *crackling*, as it is well called. The very teeth are invited to their share of the pleasure at this banquet in overcoming the coy, brittle resistance, with the adhesive oleaginous. O, call it not fat! but an indefinable sweetness growing up to it, the tender blossoming of fat, fat cropped in the bud—taken in the short, in the first innocence—the cream and quintessence of the child’s pig, yet pure food. The lean, no lean, but a kind of animal manna, or, rather, fat and lean (if it must be so), so blended and running into each other, that both together make but one

ambrosian result of common substance." Then, talking of presents, he says, "Hares, pheasants, partridges, snipes, barn-door chickens, capons, plovers, brawn, barrels of oysters, I dispense as freely as I receive them. But a stop must be put somewhere; I make my stand upon pig." Perhaps, too, Lamb argues, it is well that the pig is seen in the dish, his second cradle; for, had he been allowed to grow up, ten to one he would have proved a glutton, a sloven, an obstinate, disagreeable animal, wallowing in all manner of filthy conversation. From these sins he is happily snatched away:—

Ere sin could blight or sorrow fade,
Death came with timely care.

Southey, too, boasts himself as one —

Who, in all forms
Of pork, baked, roasted, toasted, boil'd or broil'd,
Fresh, salted, pickled, season'd, moist or dry,
Whether ham, bacon, sausage, souse, or brawn,
Leg, blade-bone, bald-rib, griskin, chine, or chop,
Prefer myself a genuine philopig.

Charles Lamb, and his eulogy on the sucking-pig, remind us of an amusing anecdote told of George Morland. He had promised a lady, who was out of health, a sucking-pig. One summer's morning, as a relative was on his way to inquire about her health, he observed a man carrying a pig in his arms, as if it had been a child. The piteous

squeaks of this little animal, unaccustomed to such a mode of conveyance, attracted the notice of passers-by. Struck with the laughable conduct of the bearer of the pig, he followed him, as the adventure promised some amusement, and the more so as the said pig-bearer, to every dog that barked, would set down the pig and pit him against the dog. In this manner he paraded several streets until he reached the house of the lady, where he readily obtained admittance with his pig. But great was the astonishment of the lady's relative, when on entering the dining-room he found this strange character with the pig under his arm, who was introduced to him as Mr. Morland, the painter.

Burns wrote a poem in praise of a Scotch "haggis," and Serjeant Ballantine was often heard to say that no luxury, of after days, ever tasted half so well as the beefsteak, and mealy potatoes, that, in the Strand, so frequently formed the dinner of his briefless days. Speaking of steaks, we are reminded of Dr. George Fordyce, who for twenty years scarcely varied his eating habits. According to his usual custom, "he took but one meal during the day. He would present himself at Dolly's chop-house in the Strand at four o'clock in the afternoon; a table was specially reserved for him, and he commenced with a dish of broiled fowl, or a few whittings, which he ate

leisurely, took a glass of brandy, and asked for his steak. When the man of science had eaten the whole of it, he took the rest of his brandy, then drank his tankard of heavy ale, and, lastly, sipped down his bottle of port. He then walked leisurely to his house in Essex Street, to give his six o'clock lecture on chemistry."

Many charming anecdotes are told of Lord Macaulay's thoughtful hospitality, which, as Sir George Trevelyan hints, had "about it a flavour of pleasant peculiarity."* In his own private life he was no epicure, for "there never was a time when his daily wants would have not been amply supplied by a couple of eggs with his coffee in the morning, and a dinner such as is served at a decent seaside lodging-house." But with his guests it was otherwise, for, adds his biographer, "he generally selected, by a half-conscious preference, dishes of an established and, if it may be so called, an historical reputation." Thus he would treat his dissenting friends to a fillet of veal, which "he maintained was the recognized Sunday dinner in good old Nonconformist families."

His loyalty to the Church he proved by keeping her feasts, and in good company, and by observing her fasts, so far, that is to say, as they could be observed by making additions to the ordinary bill of fare. Again, if he

* "Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay," ii., 409.

happened to entertain a couple of school-boys who could construe their fourth satire of Juvenal, he would give them a dish of mullet that "might have passed muster on the table of an augur, or an Emperor's freedman." Macaulay, too, liked nothing better than a Trinity gathering, and, if he could manage to collect a party of his own Cambridge contemporaries, he took care that they should have no cause to remember with regret the Trinity butteries. Accordingly, he writes to Mr. Ellis: "I should be much obliged to you to lend me a bottle, or two, of that excellent audit ale which you produced the last time that I dined with you. You shall have in return two bottles which still require time to make them perfect. I ask this because our party on Tuesday will consist exclusively of old fellows, and scholars, of Trinity, and I should like to give them some of our own nectar."

The party in question was a complete success, judging from his account of it: "November 9, Lord Mayor's Day, and I had a dinner as well as the Lord Mayor; I did my best as host. The dinner was well cooked, the audit ale perfect. We had so much to say about auld lang syne that great powers of conversation were not wanted. I have been at parties of men, celebrated for wit and eloquence, which were much less lively."

Beau Nash, popularly nicknamed King of Bath, from his having made this city a fashionable resort, was of a most hospitable turn of mind, his table having been always free to those who sought his friendship, or wanted a dinner. After grace was said he usually accosted the company in the following extraordinary manner —

“Come, gentlemen, eat and welcome; spare, and the devil choke you.”

Boiled chicken and roast mutton were his favourite meats, and he was so fond of the small sort of potatoes that he called them English pine-apples, and generally ate them as fruit after dinner. His supper was generally composed of hot roast breast of mutton and potatoes, after partaking of which he soon retired to rest. It was this habit that induced his friend, Dr. Cheney, to tell him jestingly that “he behaved like other brutes, and lay down as soon as he had filled his belly.”

“Very true,” replied Nash, “and this prescription I had from my neighbour’s cow, who is a better physician than you, and superior judge of plants, notwithstanding you have written so learnedly on the vegetable diet.”

Charles Macklin, whose talent as a comic actor, and dramatist, charmed so many during the last century, was somewhat pedantic in his diet. At seventy years of age he became

a milk-drinker, which he had always boiled, and relinquished tea. He also had bread boiled in his milk, which he sweetened with brown sugar till it was almost a syrup. About the year 1764 he lost all his teeth, and was reduced in his sustenance entirely to fish (of which he was very fond), puddings, vegetables, and spoon meat. He had, moreover, a great *penchant* for all kinds of stews, hashes, and soups, particularly giblet soup, which he used to have two or three times a week. He was a great lover of eggs, custards, and jellies.* During the last ten years of his life he had no fixed hours for his meals. He ate when he was hungry, says his biographer, "sometimes at two, three, or four o'clock in the morning, and Mrs. Macklin always got out of bed to wait on him. In fact, by her extraordinary skill she contributed to keep the old man alive much longer than it was in the power of any other human being to effect."

Similarly Jonas Hanway, of umbrella notoriety, made milk the chief part of his food for thirty years, although at first he found it somewhat difficult to accustom himself to this novel diet, and William Hutton, of Birmingham, by confining himself to milk, was cured of his gravel attacks.

Lord John Hervey, who warmly supported the administration of Walpole, was a milk-drinker.

* Kirkman's "Memoirs of C. Macklin," 1799, ii., 440.

It appears that he suffered so much from epilepsy that he was compelled to use emetics daily, and to restrict himself to a certain regimen, of which asses' milk formed a part.

Dean Hook drank milk and cream in large quantities, and when the Bishop's cows were being milked just outside the old city wall, which was the boundary of the Deanery garden, the Dean might often be seen making for the cow-house with a large tumbler in his hand, and copious were the draughts which he stole from the episcopal cows, a practice which was the subject of much joking between the Deanery and the Palace. The following humorous verses were dashed off as a reply to a lady who had sent him some Devonshire cream :—

Dear Mrs. Adair,
You certainly are
Most kind to prepare,
And send to us here,
Such delicate fare
As the cream clouted there,
Where, in Devonshire air,
The cows can repair
To pastures so fair,
To chew and to stare.

Our milkmaids declare
That, whatever their care,
They none of them dare
Their cream to compare
With yours, rich and rare.

But Oh! Mrs. Adair,
I could not forbear
To take more than my share
Of that delicate fare;
And you must be aware
What the penalties were,
When driven to despair
And tearing my hair,
I did bellow and blare
In a horrid nightmare.*

Douglas Jerrold's mode of living was simple, and in accordance with his quiet habits. His breakfast was a jug of cold new milk, some toast, bacon, watercresses, and perhaps, in summer time, a few strawberries found in the garden. It may be noted that milk, either from love or necessity, has been much in request with many of our eminent men. With Thomas Carlyle fresh milk was the most essential article of his diet, and, according to Mr. Froude,† the necessary imperfections of Scotch farm servant girls had to be supplemented by Mrs. Carlyle herself. She baked the bread, she dressed the dinner, or saw it dressed; she cleared the rooms. Among her other accomplishments she had to learn to milk the cows, in case the byre-women should be out of the way."

* "Life of Walter Farquhar Hook," by W. R. W. Stephens, ii., 470.

† "Thomas Carlyle, A History of the First Forty Years of his Life," 1882, ii., 47.

CHAPTER III.

DRINKING HABITS.

Lord Bolingbroke—C. J. Fox—Dr. Johnson—William Pitt—
T. Parnell—Goldsmith—Lord Palmerston—Addison—
Sheridan—Steele—Bentley—Pope—C. Churchill—Foote
—Porson—Robert James—Dr. George Fordyce—Dr.
Radcliffe—Dr. Lettsom—George Stephenson—David
Hume—John Wolcot—Thomson—Quin—Lord Hermand
—Lord Camden—Dr. Maginn—Lord Northington—Lord
Thurlow—Lord Stowell—Lord Eldon—Sir William Grant
—Baron Martin—Lord Chancellor Somers—J. P. Kemble
—Keats—Burns—Theodore Hook—Thomas Moore—Sir
Walter Scott—Charles Lamb—Robert Southey—James
Hogg—David Cox—Admiral Lord St. Vincent—Sir G.
Pollock—Canon Kingsley—Earl Shaftesbury—Charles
Darwin.

PERHAPS no greater change has taken place in our social life, during the present century, than in the fashion of drinking. Happily the old days, when the consumption of wine was carried to an unseemly extent, by the eminent men of the time, have passed away. Indeed, what, during the Hanoverian period of our history, was considered

moderation would, nowadays, be regarded even by wine-drinkers as immoderate. Captain Gronow, in his amusing "*Reminiscences*," has given us a capital picture of the drinking habits at the commencement of the present century. "Drinking and play were more universally indulged in then [about 1814] than at the present time, and many even still living must remember the couple of bottles of port, at least, which accompanied his dinner in those days. . . . The dinner party, commencing at seven or eight, frequently did not break up before one in the morning. There were then four and even five-bottle men, and the only thing that saved them was drinking very slowly, and out of very small glasses. The learned head of the law, Lord Eldon, and his brother, Lord Stowell, used to say that they had drunk more port than any two men in England; indeed, the former was rather apt to be overtaken, and to speak occasionally somewhat thicker than natural, after long and heavy potations.

"The late Lords Panmure, Dufferin, and Blayney, wonderful to relate, were six-bottle men at this time, and I really think that if the good society of 1815 could appear, before their more moderate descendants, in the state they were generally reduced to after dinner, the modern would pronounce their ancestors fit for nothing but bed."

But, apart from the social evil of intemperance, it would seem that even statesmen fell before this "insidious and unmerciful destroyer." In Mrs. Delany's "Correspondence" we read how "Bolingbroke, when in office, sat up whole nights drinking, and in the morning, having bound a wet napkin round his forehead and his eyes, to drive away the effects of his intemperance, he hastened without sleep to his official business." But this sort of life he could not continue to lead with impunity, and Lord Stair, in a letter to Horace Walpole, thus writes:—"Poor Harry (Bolingbroke) is turned out from being Secretary of State. They call him knave and traitor. I believe all poor Harry's fault was that he could not play his part with grave enough face. . . . He got drunk now and then."

More than once Charles James Fox is said to have taken his place in the House of Commons very far from sober, and, a few months after his first appointment to office, Walpole went to the House to hear the young orator, and thus writes:—"Fox's abilities are amazing at so very early a period, especially under the circumstances of such a dissolute life. He was just arrived from Newmarket, had sat up drinking all night, and had not been in bed." But it is needless to speak further of his intemperate habits, as they have long

ago become proverbial. Sir George Trevelyan, however, making allowance as far as possible for the young statesman's failing, has given a powerful picture of the drinking habits of the men of his time, whose influence could not but exert an injurious effect upon him :—

"These were the days when the Duke of Grafton, the Premier, lived openly with Miss Nancy Parsons. Rigby, the Paymaster of the Forces, had only one merit—that he drank fair. He used brandy as the rest of the world use small beer. Lord Weymouth, grandson of Lord Cartaret, had more than his grandfather's capacity for liquor, and a fair portion of his abilities. He constantly boozed till daylight, even when a Secretary of State." His occasional speeches were extolled by his admirers as preternaturally sagacious, and his severest critics admitted him to be pithy. Walpole made the following hit at him :—"If I paid nobody, and went drunk to bed every morning at six, I might expect to be called out of bed by two in the afternoon to save the nation, and govern the House of Lords, by two or three sentences as profound and short as the proverbs of Solomon."

"They tell me, Sir John," said George the Third to one of his favourites, "that you love a glass of wine."

"Those who have so informed your Majesty,"

was the reply, "have done me great injustice. They should have said a bottle."

Two of the friends of Philip Francis, without any sense of having performed an exceptional feat, finished between them a gallon and a half of champagne and Burgundy, a debauch which in this unheroic age it almost makes one ill to read of.

At one time of his life Dr. Johnson drank alcoholic liquors somewhat heavily. But he was wise in his generation, and had the honesty to confess that he could abstain, but he could not be moderate. Accordingly, when Hannah More pressed him one day at Bishop Porteus's table to take a little wine, he replied, "I cannot drink a *little*, child; therefore I never touch it. Abstinence is as easy to me, as temperance would be difficult." Would that many others, before and after him, had been equally sensible!

William Pitt's love of port wine has long become proverbial, and Rogers has left the following interesting reminiscences of the statesman's port-drinking habits:—"During his boyhood Pitt was very weakly, and his physician, Addington (Lord Sidmouth's father), ordered him to take port wine in large quantities; the consequence was that when he grew up he could not do without it." Lord Granville has seen him

swallow a bottle of port in tumblerfuls before going to the House. This, together with his habit of eating late suppers (indigestible cold veal pies, etc.), helped undoubtedly to shorten his life. Huskisson, speaking to me of Pitt, said that his hands shook so much that, when he helped himself to salt, he was obliged to support the right hand with the left. Stothard, the painter, happened to be one evening at an inn on the Kent Road, when Pitt and Dundas put up there on their way from Walmer. Next morning, as they were stepping into their carriage, the waiter said to Stothard —

“Sir, do you observe these two gentlemen?”

“Yes,” he replied, “and I know them to be Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas.”

“Well, sir, how much wine do you suppose they drank last night?”

Stothard could not guess.

“Seven bottles, sir.”

Percy Fitzgerald, in his “Life of George IV.,” giving a picture of the social manners and customs prevailing about the year 1787, says:—
“Pitt, the model young minister, broke down in the House in the following year, owing to a debauch the night before at Lord Buckingham’s, when, in company with Dundas and the Duke of Gordon, he took too much wine.” But, in justice

to Pitt, it must be acknowledged that his drinking habits have been much exaggerated, in spite of the idle and ill-natured epigrams, like the following, that were circulated about him :—

On folly every fool his talent tries ;
It needs some toil to imitate the wise,
Though few like Fox can speak—like Pitt can think,
Yet all like Fox can game—like Pitt can drink.

Sir Robert Walpole patronized boisterous hilarity in the society which he frequented, and at the merry meetings which were the relaxations of his life. Neither did he regard the decorum which sober habits sustain, but followed, in respect of convivial enjoyments, rather the fashion of his own day than ours.

Poor Thomas Parnell unquestionably shortened his life through intemperance, and Dr. Johnson, it may be remembered, in his "*Lives of the Poets*," thus speaks of him :—"Pope represents him as falling into intemperance of wine after Queen Anne's death, in consequence of disappointed ambition. That in his later life he was too much of a lover of the bottle is not denied, but I have heard it imputed to a cause more likely to obtain forgiveness from mankind, the untimely death of a darling son, or, as others tell, the loss of his wife."

The use of wine was a besetting sin of Gold-

smith, and kept his pocket empty. Most readers know how, when arrested by his landlady for rent, he sent to Johnson, who, forwarding him a guinea, promised to come immediately. But, before he arrived, Goldsmith had actually changed the guinea, and "had a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him." Upon Johnson inquiring how he proposed to pay his rent, he replied that he had the MS. of a novel ready for the press—"The Vicar of Wakefield." Johnson took it to a bookseller, and selling it for sixty pounds, paid the rent, and Goldsmith, after rowing his landlady for her conduct, insisted on her giving him a bowl of punch.

The following anecdote was one day related by Lord Palmerston to a deputation of gentlemen who waited upon him to urge the reduction of the wine duties. Referring to the adulterations, "I remember," said his lordship, "my grandfather, Lord Pembroke, when he placed wine before his guests, said: 'There, gentlemen, is my champagne, my claret, etc. I am no great judge, and I give you this on the authority of my wine merchant, but I can answer for my port, for I made it myself.' I have still his receipt, which I look on as a curiosity, but I confess *I have never ventured to try it.*" The following is the receipt which Lord Pembroke adopted:—"Eight gallons

of genuine port wine, forty gallons of cider, brandy to fill the hogshead. Elder tops will give it the proper roughness, and cochineal whatever strength of colouring you please. The quantity made should not be less than a hogshead. It should be kept fully two years in cask, and as long in bottle before it is used." This receipt has, probably, since his time been found highly useful in supplying the cellar of many a port wine drinker.

It is generally said that Addison gave in too much to the ordinary drinking habits of his time, and indications in his letters, and elsewhere, confirm this solitary imputation upon his moral propriety; and yet he maintained that "temperance and abstinence, faith and devotion, are in themselves, perhaps, as laudable as any other virtues." According to one report, he shortened his life by an excessive use of "Canary wine and Barbadoes water," but the real truth, no doubt, is that, though not intemperate according to the standard of the time, he sometimes resorted to stimulants to overcome bashfulness, or depression of spirits. It would seem that, when once he had overcome his diffidence, the charm of his conversation was unequalled, and then, even, his opponents could not but admire a thousand things in him which lay buried before. But, although his biographer,

Miss Aikin, has defended him from the imputation of drinking, this weakness has generally been acknowledged. Thus Dr. Johnson writes of him:—"He studied all morning, then dined at a tavern, and went afterwards to Button's. Button had been a servant in the Countess of Warwick's family, who, under the patronage of Addison, kept a coffee-house on the south side of Russell Street, about two doors from Covent Garden. Here it was that the wits of that time used to assemble. It is said, when Addison had suffered any vexation from the Countess, he withdrew the company from Button's house. From the coffee-house he went again to a tavern, where he often sat late, and drank too much wine. In the bottle, discontent seeks for comfort, cowardice for courage, and bashfulness for confidence. It is not unlikely that Addison was first seduced to excess by the manumission which he obtained from the servile timidity of his sober hours. He that feels oppression from the presence of those to whom he knows himself superior, will desire to set loose his powers of conversation, and who, that ever asked succour from Bacchus, was able to preserve himself from being enslaved by his auxiliary?"

Sheridan, we are told, did not display his intellectual powers in company till he had been warmed by wine. During the earlier part of the

dinner he was generally heavy and silent, but, after dinner, when he had drunk a tolerable quantity of wine, his convivial talents were the charm, and delight, of all present. Numerous anecdotes are related of his table talk, many of which are very amusing. Thus Mr. Poyntz told Haydon, the painter, that once, when he was dining with Sheridan at Somerset House, and they were all in high feather, in rushed the servant and said —

“Sir, the house is on fire !”

“Bring another bottle of claret,” said Sheridan, “it is not my house.”

One night, writes Byron, Sheridan was found in the street by a watchman, bereft of that “divine particle of air” called reason, and fuddled, and bewildered, and almost insensible. The watchman asked —

“Who are you, sir ?”

No answer.

“What’s your name ?”

Answer, in a slow, deliberate, and impassive tone —

“Wilberforce !”

Whereupon Byron notes, “Is not that Sherry all over ? And to my mind excellent. Poor fellow ! *His* very dregs are better than the first sprightly runnings of others.” Sir Nathaniel

Wraxall tells us that when he last dined in company with Sheridan, in the year 1807, he displayed his usual convivial talents, which never forsook him. But the host, the Duke of Queensberry, who was above eighty years old, and had become deaf, did not allow Sheridan to sit long enough, or to swallow sufficient wine, for fully expanding his powers of colloquial entertainment.

Much, however, as Sheridan's graceful wit and humour were admired, one cannot forget that it was, in a great measure, dependent on the wine he consumed, when there was that ever-speaking lustre in his eye which rendered it impossible, says Moore, even when he happened to be silent, to forget who he was. "If the thought," he would say, "is slow to come, a glass of good wine encourages it, and when it *does* come, a glass of good wine rewards it." But, as Captain Gronow remarks, "many of the follies, and extravagances, that marked the life of this gifted, but reckless, personage must be attributed to the times in which he existed. Drinking was the fashion of the day."

Steele drank freely, and wrote many of his articles for *The Tatler* in pot-houses; and Bentley is said to have been an admirer of good old port, but spoke contemptuously of claret,

which he said "would be port if it could." Pope, in his "Dunciad," thus speaks of his fondness for port —

As many quit the streams that murmuring fall,
To lull the sons of Margaret and Clare-hall,
Where Bentley late tempestuous wont to sport
In troubled waters, but now sleeps in port.

But even Pope himself is generally supposed to have hastened his death by "drinking spirits and feeding on highly-seasoned dishes."

The celebrated satirist and poet, Charles Churchill, was sadly intemperate in his drinking habits. One day, when at the Bedford Arms parlour—where he with certain others had formed a whist club—he fell out with Hogarth, and insultingly called him "a very shallow fellow," following up his remark by writing disparagingly of the artist's productions. But Hogarth was equal to the occasion, and revenged the sneer. Converting an old copper plate into a palimpsest, he drew a caricature of Churchill as a growling bear with the ragged canonicals of a parson, for such the poet had been; a pot of porter by his side; and a ragged staff in his paw, each knot inscribed "lye."

Although Dean Swift regarded himself as a temperate man, he enjoyed his port, and used to give his guests excellent wine; while Byron seems to have been intemperate by fits and starts,

having composed, it is said, much of his poetry under the influence of gin.

On one occasion Samuel Foote—dining at the table of a nobleman who gave nothing but port wine—met his wine merchant, who asked him, in the course of conversation, how the last pipe of port turned out.

“Why, I should suppose pretty well,” said he, “as I have had no complaints from the kitchen.”

There was as much truth as jest in this reply; as Foote, when he had cash, indulged his servants in all kinds of luxuries. On another day, being at the same table, when the Cape was going round in remarkably small glasses, his lordship was very profuse on the excellence of the wine, its age, etc.

“But,” he said, “you don’t seem to relish it, Foote, by keeping your glass so long before you.”

“Oh, yes, my lord,” he replied, “perfectly well. I am only admiring how little it is considering its great age.”*

Porson’s habit of drinking has long ago become proverbial; and, indeed, had he lived in the present rather than the past century, his character would not have been so easily cleared of his inordinate love of drink. “Seldom,” says Sydney Smith, “did gentlemen in the last century come sober into the drawing-room;” but Porson’s

* “Memoirs of Samuel Foote,” William Cooke, iii., 58-9.

extravagances, in spite of the excuses of the time, were so abnormal that, it has even been suggested, they must be attributed to some unexplored disease. Then, at breakfast, porter was his favourite beverage, in allusion to which the following story is told :—

One Sunday morning, meeting Dr. Goodall, Provost of Eton, he said—

“Where are you going?”

“To church,” he replied.

“Where is Mrs. Goodall?” asked Porson.

“At breakfast.”

“Very well; I’ll go and breakfast with her.”

Accordingly Porson called on Mrs. Goodall, and being asked what he would like to have, said “Porter.” It was sent for, pot after pot; and the sixth pot was being carried into the house when Dr. Goodall returned from church.

Another well-known anecdote of a somewhat embarrassing nature is told of Porson’s determined love of drink:—When Hoppner, the painter, was residing a few miles from London, Porson called one afternoon; his friend regretting that he could not offer him hospitality as his wife had gone to town, and taken the key of the wine cellar. Porson, however, declaring that he would be content with a mutton chop, and beer from the next ale-house, stayed to dine. But during the

evening he suggested that his friend should make a search for some wine, adding, "I am quite certain that Mrs. Hoppner keeps some nice bottle for her private drinking in her own bedroom; so pray try if you can lay your hands on it." In vain his host affirmed to the contrary, but, Porson insisting that they should look, a bottle was at last discovered in the lady's apartment, much to the surprise of Hoppner, and the joy of his guest, who, quickly finishing its contents, pronounced it to be the best gin he had tasted for a long time.

Next day Hoppner, somewhat vexed, informed his wife that Porson had drunk every drop of her concealed spirit.

"Drunk every drop of it?" cried she. "My God! it was spirits of wine for the lamp."

It is said that Porson could drink anything—even ink, and the story goes that he once drank an embrocation. His capacity for drinking was simply prodigious, and, curious to say, did not interfere with his intellectual powers. According to Rogers, when dining out, he would often, after the visitors had left the table, pour into a tumbler the drops remaining in the wine glasses, and drink off the *omnium gatherum*.

"No man brings more *mind* to his profession than James," remarked Dr. Johnson of this physician of the last century, who gained a

notoriety by his famous fever powders ; an injudicious dose of which, taken without the knowledge of his medical attendants, is said to have proved fatal to poor Oliver Goldsmith. But Robert James, whatever his medical skill, gave way to intemperate habits, which occasionally betrayed him into the commission of gross absurdities. On comparing the pulse of a patient with his own, quickened as it was by the stimulants he had swallowed, he would sometimes confound them together, and bluntly tax the sick person with being drunk. But, fortunately for his own reputation, he rarely committed blunders of this kind early in the day, refraining from the bottle until after dinner.

Dr. George Fordyce, the fashionable physician, had a similar propensity, and was, one evening, called away, from a drinking bout, to see a lady of title who was supposed to have been taken suddenly ill. Arrived at her residence, he listened to the recital of a train of symptoms, which appeared somewhat anomalous, and then examined her pulse. He tried in vain to reckon the number of beats, but his brain whirled ; and, conscious of the cause of his difficulty, he inadvertently blurted out in a moment of irritation, " Drunk, by Jove ! " The lady heard the remark, but said nothing, and Dr. Fordyce, after prescribing a mild remedy, took

his departure. Early next morning he was again sent for by his lady patient, and, ill at ease from recollecting the state in which he had visited her, he was fully prepared for a severe reprimand. But, much to his happy surprise, she thanked him for his prompt attention ; and, after apologizing for the condition in which he had found her on the previous evening, exacted a promise that he would keep the secret. "You may depend upon me, madam," he replied, with a countenance unmoved, "I shall be silent as the grave."

Many tavern anecdotes are told illustrative of Dr. Radcliffe and his intemperate habits. According to one story, he once refused to quit a tavern until he had finished his bottle, although urgently entreated by her husband to visit a lady who was in great danger. Irritated by his conduct, the gentleman forcibly carried him out of the house, Radcliffe, in the meantime, calling him uncomplimentary terms, and swearing that in revenge he would cure his wife—a threat which he carried into effect.

Another well-known tavern anecdote tells us that while dining one day with Lord Granville and others of the principal nobility, at the Mitre, in Fleet Street, he received a letter from a man under sentence of death in Newgate for a highway robbery, confessing that he had some time before

stolen £150 from Radcliffe, whose intercession he earnestly solicited to obtain a commutation of the sentence. Radcliffe immediately applied to Lord Granville, at the same time, remarking that the man's confession established the innocence of one whom he had unjustly suspected. Through this nobleman's interest, the culprit was reprieved, and transported to Virginia, whence in a short time he sent produce to Radcliffe equivalent to the amount of his loss.

Dr. Lettsom, another celebrated physician of the last century, enjoyed his three or four glasses of wine after dinner, and "his temperate habits," says Mr. Pettigrew,* "conduced to the enjoyment of his health." But, in these days of temperance societies, it may be questioned whether the good doctor would now be considered abstemious. Anyhow, the following passage, in a letter which he received from his friend Dr. Cumins, seems to show that he was not altogether free from the imputation of excess in his drinking habits:—"Let me seriously advise you, my friend, for the sake of your health, to relinquish your nocturnal lucubrations, and your convivialities, to go to bed with your wife and family at eleven o'clock, and rise every morning as early as you please." On the other hand, according to Mr. Pettigrew,

* *Memoirs of, i., 172.*

"coffee was his favourite beverage, which, as he was accustomed to sit up frequently during half the night to answer his numerous correspondents, and pursue his literary engagements, very much refreshed him."

An amusing story is told of George Stephenson and his port wine. While at Liverpool he had very little time for company, but, on one particular occasion, he invited his friend Mr. Sandars to dinner, and, as his friend was a connoisseur in port wine, his host determined to give him a special treat. Accordingly, Stephenson went to the small merchant with whom he usually dealt, and ordered "half-a-dozen of his very best port wine," which was promised of first-rate quality. After dinner the wine was produced, and when Mr. Sandars had sipped a glass, George, after waiting a little for the expected eulogium, at length asked—

"Well, Sandars, how d'ye like the port?"

"Poor stuff!" said the guest, "poor stuff!"

Stephenson was naturally very much shocked, and with difficulty recovered his good humour. But he lived to be able to treat Mr. Sandars to a superior article at Tapton House, and oftentimes laughed over his futile attempt at Liverpool to gain a reputation for his port.

Among some of the many stories recorded of

David Hume the following is told by Mr. Ritchie in his life of the historian (1808, 298):—"The author of 'Douglas' is said to have a mortal aversion to port wine and to have had frequent disputes, with the historian, about the manner of spelling his name. Both these circumstances were often the subject of Mr. Hume's raillery, and he verbally bequeathed to the poet a quantity of port wine, on condition that he should always drink a bottle at a sitting, and give a receipt for it under the signature of John Hume."

The talented writer, John Wolcot—better known by the appellation of Peter Pindar—used to inveigh, both in his writings and conversation, against the treatment he received from publishers, and the following characteristic anecdote is recorded of him, when dining one day at the house of a celebrated bookseller:—"The host had left the room, when someone proposed his health. 'No!' said Dr. Wolcot, rising, and at the same time brandishing a bottle of port in his hand, 'No! let us drink a bumper to our own, for this is authors' blood!'"

An equally convivial man was Thomson, the author of the "Seasons," the following anecdote being told of him:—"Mr. H., of Bangor, was once asked to dinner by Thomson, but could not attend. One of his friends, who was there, told

him that there was a general stipulation agreed on, by the whole company, that there should be no hard drinking. Thomson acquiesced, only requiring that each man should drink his bottle. The terms were accepted unconditionally, and when the cloth was removed a three-quart bottle was set before each of his guests. Thomson had much of this agreeable kind of humour."

According to another anecdote, Quin and himself would return home at four o'clock in the morning, and, as may be imagined, not over sober. When he was writing, in his own house, he frequently sat with a bowl of punch before him, and that a good large one.

With Lord Hermand drinking was a virtue, and he had a serious compassion for those who could not indulge in it, and a contempt of those who could, but would not. No carouse ever injured his health, for he was never ill, nor did it impair his taste for home or quiet, or muddle his head. It is said that he used very often to go direct from his club, to the Court, on Saturday mornings. When some of his friends were once protesting against more wine, he mournfully exclaimed—"What shall we come to at last? I believe I shall be left alone, on the face of the earth, drinking claret!"

Though never addicted to excess, there had

been a time when the habits of Charles Pratt, Earl Camden, harmonizing with the geniality of his disposition, had not only inclined him to be convivial, but when, as regarded the delicacies of the table, he is said to have displayed a tendency to epicurism. But with the increase of years, and probably with the fear of gout before his eyes, writes Mr. Jesse, he seems to have made strict abstinence his rule of life. Writing to the Duke of Grafton, who had invited him to stay with him, he says :—"I am, thank God, remarkably well, but your Grace must not seduce me into my former intemperance. A plain dish and a draught of porter, which last is indispensable, are the very extent of my luxury." As years rolled on, he altogether discountenanced the drinking of heating wines, and highly seasoned dishes, and, by a judicious care of himself, arrived at a strong and healthy old age.*

As an after-dinner conversationalist Dr. Maginn was known for the liveliness of his fancy, and the diversity of his anecdotes, but unfortunately he was not free from those wild irregularities which have spoilt the career of so many men. But, as it has been often remarked, genius is seldom perfect, and, alas! that fault which exiled Fox from the Cabinet of England and reduced

* See Lord Campbell's "Lives of the Chancellors," v., 299.

Sheridan to poverty and shame, was the ruin, too, of William Maginn. Lockhart, writing on his deceased friend some lines descriptive of his character, concluded thus—

At last he was beat, and sought help from the bin,
(All the same to the doctor, from claret to gin),
Which led swiftly to gaol, with consumption therein.
It was much, when the bones rattled loose in his skin,
He got leave to die here,* out of Babylon's din.
Barring drink and the girls, I ne'er heard of a sin,
Many worse, better few, than bright, broken Maginn.

A noted port wine drinking judge was Lord Northington, who, it may be remembered, prevailed on George III. to let him discontinue the evening attendances in Court.

"But why," asked his Majesty, "do you wish for a change?"

"Sir," replied the Chancellor, "I want the change that I may finish my bottle of port at my ease, and your Majesty, in your parental care for the happiness of your subjects, will, I trust, think this a sufficient reason."

The King, laughing at this novel request, good naturedly made the required change, and henceforth the good Chancellor was allowed to drink his port uninterrupted by the cares of office.

Lord Thurlow relished his full-bodied port, and under its influence, it is said, were seen to best

* Walton-on-Thames, August, 1842.

advantage those colloquial powers which caused Johnson to remark—"Depend upon it, sir, it is when you come close to a man in conversation that you discover what his real abilities are. Now I honour Thurlow, sir; Thurlow is a fine fellow. He fairly puts his mind to yours."

Referring to Lord Stowell, of whom mention has already been made, two bottles formed with him no uncommon allowance, although, as years advanced, he was never seen to be affected by it. For some years his brother made it a rule to dine with him, on the first day of term, at a tavern near the Temple, on which occasions the quantity of wine consumed seems even to have astonished the waiters. Recalling, in after-years, these terminal dinners to his son-in-law, Lord Sidmouth, the latter observed —

"You drank some wine together, I dare say?"

"Yes, we drank some wine," replied Lord Stowell.

"Two bottles?" added his son-in-law, inquisitively.

"More than that."

"What! three bottles?" exclaimed his son-in-law.

"More."

"By Jove, sir! you don't mean to say that you took four bottles?"

Lord Stowell, somewhat ashamed at these admissions on his part, rejoined —

“More! I mean to say we had more. Now don’t ask any more questions.”

But, throughout his professional career, prudence made him careful to avoid anything like the ill-effects of over-drinking, and, when he found that a friendship often betrayed him into excess, he wisely withdrew from it. Thus, writing to his brother in May, 1778, he says :—“I see your friend Bowles very often, but I dare not dine with him above once in three months, as there is no getting away before midnight, and, indeed, one is sure to be in a condition in which no man would wish to be in the streets, at any other season.”

Until the close of his life Lord Eldon was an habitual port wine drinker, and, just three weeks before his death, the veteran lawyer, sitting in his easy chair, and recalling his early triumphs, precluded an account of the great leading case, *Akroyd v. Smithson*, by saying to his listener, “Come, Farrer, help yourself to a glass of Newcastle port, and help me to a little.” But, we are told, although the old lawyer asked for a little, he drank much before he was raised from his chair, and conducted to his sleeping apartment. It is further stated that, in his extreme old age, he

never drank less than three pints of port daily with, or after, his dinner.

Sir William Grant, Master of the Rolls, was a man of simple habits. In his time the Rolls Court sat in the evening, from six to ten, and Sir William usually dined after the Court rose. His servant, it is said, when he went to bed, left two bottles of wine on the table, which he always found empty in the morning.

A humorous and amusing anecdote used to be told by Mr. Justice Talfourd of a man of genius who was noted for his improvidence. It appears he had invited a large party to dinner, when it was observed that, although wine was served in profusion, there were no two bottles of the same. The mystery was soon explained.

"I have no credit with my wine merchant, nor, to say the truth, with any other man's wine merchant, and I was sadly puzzled how to manage for you, when a fellow knocked at the door with specimens of Indian wines, or what he called wines, so I told him to leave a bottle of each on trial, and call again to-morrow." This announcement was far from reassuring, and, as some of the company complained of incipient pains in the stomach, he was requested to send for some brandy by way of antidote.

"With all my heart," was the reply, "but you

must first club your sixpence apiece," and the sixpences being clubbed accordingly, the threatened sickness was averted, and the half-empty bottles of wine were put aside, to be returned to the composer.

In early life Baron Martin was so completely prostrated by severe illness that two of his friends, standing over his silent body, gave expression to the sentiment —

"Ah, poor dear fellow, we shall never drink a glass of wine with him again," when suddenly, to their momentary alarm, and subsequent delight, he interposed —

"But you will, though, and a good many, too, I hope."

The young lawyer, who was not dead yet, lived to old age, besides accomplishing much useful work. Over the dinner table, he often used to tell this anecdote, which rarely failed to excite much laughter.

It would seem that Lord Chancellor Somers was pleasantly affected by wine, for his countenance relaxed its severe expression, and, according to Swift —

By force of wine even Scarborough is brave,
Hall grows more pert, and Somers not so grave.

Following the fashion of the day, John Philip Kemble was fond of deep drinking, a practice to which, it has been asserted, he unquestionably

owed the comparatively premature decay of his health. "It is characteristic, however, of the man," writes Mr. Percy Fitzgerald,* that "his conviviality never took the shape of coarse drunkenness. He contrived to 'carry his liquor discreetly,' and, even in his cups, it was the thought of his profession that came uppermost, and it was then that his friends were amused to hear him vehemently asserting his own merits."

Of the many stories told of his convivial moments, the late Mr. Adolphus has given an amusing picture of such a scene in this celebrated actor's early life.

About five one morning Kemble, after a very late dinner party, dropped into a night club at Covent Garden, known as "The Finish," and began almost immediately to dwell on his favourite topic—his own gifts, his standing at the head of his profession—and then recited from Shakespeare. The audience were in high spirits, and kept interrupting the recitation with such remarks as —

"Well, Mr. Kemble, we give you leave to go on."

"Give me leave, sir!" replied Kemble, in his most haughty fashion. "As well might a barber at Rome have said to Coriolanus, 'I give you leave to do something.'"

* "The Kembles," ii., 240-41.

On someone retorting angrily, at his disparagement of barbers, he replied —

“God forbid that I should say anything against barbers, for a relation of my own was once one,” alluding either to his father, or his brother-in-law.

The company present then began to quiz his peculiarities of pronunciation, which ruffled his temper, and at this crisis the landlady, with a tray of glasses, happening to touch him as she passed by, so incensed the tragedian that he swept them all from the tray in a rage, cutting his hand severely.

In spite of his delicate health, Keats did not refrain from indulging somewhat in that dissipation which a Mr. Monkton Milnes remarks “is the natural outlet for the young energies of ardent temperaments, unconscious how scanty a portion of vital strength had been allotted him, but a strictly regulated, and abstinent, life would have appeared to him pedantic and sentimental.”

But, whatever his later faults, he did not always allow wine to any serious extent to usurp on his intellect, for in one of his letters he speaks of having drunk too much as a rare piece of joviality. In his walking tour in the summer of the year 1818, describing his arrival at Dumfries, he says : — “We have now begun on whisky, called here ‘whuskey.’ Very smart stuff it is. Mixed, like

our liquors, with sugar and water, 'tis called toddy; very pretty drink, and much praised by Burns," and adds how they drank "some toddy" to poor Burns' memory. The malicious criticism, however, with which his "Endymion" was received almost turned his head, and drove him to find relief in drink. According to Haydon, "for six weeks he was scarcely sober, and to show what a man will do to gratify his appetites when they get the better of him, he once covered his tongue and throat, as far as he could reach, with cayenne pepper, in order to appreciate, to quote his own words, 'the delicious coldness of claret in all its glory.'"

When Burns was remonstrated with by a lady—one of his intimate friends—for wasting his time with drinking companions, he replied: "Madam, they would not thank me for my company if I did not drink with them, so I must give them a slice of my constitution." His excesses have often been made the subject of comment, and, like many others, he had not the moral courage to give up a pernicious habit, which, he confessed, was "the devil to him." At times he made up his mind to be regular in his drinking habits, and abstained from taverns, but his good resolutions were soon forgotten when he attended the private parties of the "hard-drinking gentle-

men" of the period. At the close of the year 1793, Burns was at such a gathering at Walter Riddel's, when he became scandalously drunk and was really rude to Mrs. Riddel. It is true he expressed the bitterest remorse on the following day, but the Riddels broke with him for some time, whereupon he wrote a series of bitter lampoons upon the lady. Eventually, however, Mrs. Riddel became reconciled to him, and saw him before his death, writing an appreciative obituary notice of him soon after his death in the *Dumfries Journal*.

A highly convivial man was Theodore Hook, and it has been stated that the disorder, under which he long laboured, arose from a diseased state of the liver and stomach, brought on partly by anxiety, but "chiefly, it is to be feared, by that habit of over-indulgence at table," which has, sooner or later, ruined the health of so many great men. "Indeed," as it has been remarked, "a stanza of his own composition, reveals in brief the man :—

"Then, now I'm resolved at all sorrows to blink,
Since winking's the tippy I'll tip 'em the wink,
I'll never get drunk when I cannot get drink,
Nor ever let misery bore me.
I sneer at the Fates, and I laugh at their spite,
I sit down contented to sit up all night,
And when my time comes, from the world take my flight,
For—my father did so before me."

In private life Thomas Moore partook of the convivial spirit of his muse, and was as much an admirer of sparkling eyes, and glittering glasses, at the social board as he was in his poems. But the death of his only remaining child, and his last, and most beloved sister, deeply affected his health, and crushed his spirits. He made engagements to dinner and forgot them, and, when he did appear, his gay flow of spirits and humorous stories were wanting. When, too, as Lord John Russell writes, he was seen "in the midst of the gay, and the convivial, without his gaiety and without his conviviality, when the fine fancy appeared not so much sobered as saddened, it was a cheerless sight."

On the other hand, unless Sir Walter Scott had been a man of sober habits, he could not have accomplished the large amount of literary work he got through. His principal indulgence in alcohol was an occasional glass of whisky toddy, the quantity of which he reduced as he grew older. And yet he was not averse to the moderate enjoyment of wine, although he repudiated anything approaching to excess. Thus, writing to his son, he says:—"A man may be violent and outrageous in his liquor, but wine seldom makes a gentleman a blackguard, or instigates a loyal man to utter sedition. Wine unveils the passions, and

throws away restraint, but it does not create habits, or opinions, which did not previously exist in his mind. Besides, what sort of defence is this of intemperance? I suppose if a private commits riot, or is disobedient in his cups, his officers do not admit whisky to be an excuse. I have seen enough of that sort of society, where habitual indulgence drowned, at last, every distinction between what is worthy and unworthy. And I have seen young men with the fairest prospects, turn out degraded, miserable outcasts before their life was half spent, merely from soaking and sotting, and the bad habits these naturally lead to." But this was not the only occasion he warned his son against drinking, for writing from Abbotsford, August 7th, 1819, he says:—"To drink hard is none of your habits, but even drinking what is called a certain quantity every day heats the stomach, and by hereditary descent yours is delicate. I believe the poor Duke of Buccleuch laid the foundation of that disease, which occasioned his premature death, in the excesses of Villars's regiment; and I am sorry and ashamed to say, for your warning, that the habit of drinking wine, so much practised when I was a young man, occasioned, I am convinced, many of my cruel stomach complaints. You had better drink a bottle of wine on any particular occasion,

than sit, and soak, and tipple, at an English pint every day.”*

Port, Sir Walter Scott considered as physic. He never willingly swallowed more than one glass of it, and was sure to anathematize a second, if offered, by repeating John Home’s epigram—

Bold and erect the Caledonian stood,
Old was his mutton and his claret good;
“Let him drink port,” the English statesman cried—
He drank the poison, and his spirit died.

Much injustice has been done to Charles Lamb, writes Barry Cornwall, by accusing him of excess in drinking. The truth is, he says, that a small quantity of any strong liquid disturbed his speech, which at best was but an eloquent stammer. The distresses of his early life made him ready to resort to any remedy which brought forgetfulness. And he himself, frail in body, and excitable, was very speedily affected. “During all my intimacy with him,” adds Barry Cornwall, “I never knew him drink immoderately, except once, when having been prevailed upon to abstain altogether from wine and spirits, he resented the vow thus forced upon him, by imbibing an extraordinary quantity of the ‘spurious’ liquid. When he says, ‘The waters have gone over me,’ he speaks in metaphor, not historically. He was never vanquished by water, and seldom by wine.”

* “Life of Sir Walter Scott,” E. Lockhart, 1855, 407.

But, on the other hand, as the *Edinburgh Reviewer* remarks, Lamb's own self-accusations, and self-reproach, speak for themselves, and the following penitential letter to Mr. Cary, the accomplished translator of Dante, at the British Museum, admits of no comment :—

“I protest I know not in what words to invest my sense of the shameful violation of hospitality which I was guilty of on that fatal Wednesday. Let it be blotted from the calendar. Had it been committed at a layman's house—say a merchant's or a manufacturer's, a cheesemonger's or greengrocer's, or, to go higher, a barrister's, a member of Parliament's, or a rich banker's, I should have felt alleviation, a drop of self-pity. But to be seen deliberately to go out of the house of a clergyman drunk ! A clergyman of the Church of England too ! And then, from what house ! Not a common glebe or vicarage (which yet had been shameful), but from a kingly depository of sciences, human and divine, with the Primate of England for its guardian, arrayed in public majesty, from which the profane vulgar are bid fly. Could all those volumes have taught me nothing better ? . . . Occasion led me through Great Russell Street yesterday. I gazed at the great knocker. My feeble hands essayed in vain to lift it. I dreaded that Argus, who doubtless lanterned me out on

that prodigious night. I called the Elgin Marbles ; they were cold to my suit. I shall never again, I said, on the wide gates unfolding, say, without fear of thrusting back, in a light but a peremptory air, ' I am going to Mr. Cary's.' "

His friend and executor, Thomas Talfourd, whilst admitting the existence of this frailty, says that Charles Lamb made heroic sacrifices to escape the temptation when presented, and adds that the frailty itself was so intimately associated with all that was most endearing in his intellectual, and sweetest in his moral excellencies, that it would be impossible, without noticing it, to do justice to his virtues."

But, in all honest praise of Lamb, and after making every allowance for any fault he may have possessed, we must ever grieve that one so beloved—so intellectually great—so sorely tried—should ever at any time have fallen a victim to so humiliating a habit.

A glass of punch was a luxury that Robert Southey could not refuse. " After supper," writes his son, " when the business of the day seemed to be over, though he generally took a book, he remained with his family, and was open to enter into conversation, to amuse, and to be amused. It was on such times that the most pleasant fire-side chattings, and the most interesting stories, came forth. And, indeed, it was at such a time," he

adds, "that 'The Doctor' was originated, as may be seen by the beginning of that work." Notwithstanding that the very mention of "my glass of punch," the one, temperate, never-exceeded glass of punch, may be a stumbling-block to some of my readers, I am constrained by the very love of the perfect picture which the first lines of "The Doctor," convey of the conclusion of his evening, to transcribe them:—"I was in the fourth night of the story of the doctor and his horse, and had broken it off, not, like Scheherazade, because it was time to get up, but because it was time to go to bed. It was at thirty-five minutes after ten o'clock on the 20th July, in the year of our Lord 1813. I finished my glass of punch, tinkled the spoon against its side, as if making music to my own meditations, and having fixed my eyes at the head of her own table, I said, 'It ought to be written in a book!'"

"This scene," adds his son,* "took place at the table of the Bhow Begum,† but it may be easily transferred to his ordinary room, where he sat after supper in one corner, with the fire on his left hand, and a small table on his right, looking on at his family circle in front of him."

Southey did not altogether regard the tavern

* Miss Barker, the senhora of earlier days, who was living at that time in a house close to Greta Hall.

† Life and Correspondence of, by Rev. C. Cuthbert Southey, vi., 6.

with a favourable eye, and writes:—"For the labouring man the ale-house is too often a place of unmingled evil; where, while he is single, he squanders the money which ought to be laid up as a provision for marriage or old age; and where, if he frequent it after he is married, he commits the far heavier sin of spending, for his own selfish gratification, the earnings upon which the woman, and children, whom he has rendered dependent upon him, have the strongest of all claims."

On one occasion, when James Hogg was visiting Keswick, he sent an invitation to Greta Hall, asking Southey to come to his inn, and "drink one half-mutchkin with him." The poet came, and stayed an hour and a half, but showed no disposition to imbibe. "I was," says Hogg, "aggrieved, as well as an astonished man when I found that he refused all participation in my beverage of rum-punch. For a poet to refuse his glass was to me a phenomenon; and I confess I doubted in my own mind, and doubt to this day, if perfect sobriety, and transcendent poetical genius can exist together. In Scotland I am sure they cannot. With regard to the English, I shall leave them to settle that among themselves, as they have little that is worth drinking." Southey evidently thought otherwise, and Hogg himself, till he got to Edinburgh, had led a very temperate life, but he was "evidently

to the manner born, and took to his grog like a poet." One of his first publishers, Jamie Robertson, he happily describes as "a kind-hearted, confused body, who loved a joke and a dram." It appears that "the two worthies met each day to consult about literary matters, and uniformly proceeded to a house in the Cowgate, where they drank with the printers till Hogg's brain was so dizzy, that on leaving he could hardly walk. Long before this, however, he records how, when the two Cunninghams, father and son, had sought him out when herding his master's ewes on a Nithsdale hill, the elder produced a 'strong bottle,' with which they retired into the lonely bothy, and talked and boozed far into the afternoon; and it was Lockhart's store of Jamaica rum which enabled the shepherd, as he confesses, to overcome his rustic timidity."

David Cox's habits at Bettwys-y-Coed were exceedingly primitive and simple. After his day's labours he would often sit in the evening in the parlour of the Royal Oak Inn, which in his time was a thoroughly artists' club. Here he would enjoy his pint of ale, "with one or two cronies by his side, willing to listen and willing to teach." "There was," says Mr. Solly,* "no racket, no

* "Life of David Cox," 172.

shouting, no fastness, or slang—it was an intelligent, rational, pleasant evening's amusement," and oftentimes might be heard French, German, Hungarian, English, and Welsh flowing on like a polyglot stream at the sametime in that same dingy parlour. He was most moderate in his habits, and even when in company drank but little wine. Indeed, Mr. Solly has given several charming little pictures of him in his social life, from which we learn that, however simple his mode of living might be, he thoroughly valued and appreciated the convivial board of his friends, which he never allowed to incapacitate him for work.

Admiral Lord St. Vincent was much opposed to intemperance in any form or shape; and, although his hospitality was unbounded, he was greatly offended when he observed any approach to familiarity between subordinates and their superiors. "Thus, on one occasion," writes Captain Brenton,* "Sir George Cockburn, and one or two other Lords of the Admiralty, dined with him at his country seat, at Rochetts, in company with some persons well known to them, but not, as his lordship thought, qualified to address them in the style they did at dinner—'Cockburn, wine?' 'Osborn, wine?' 'And then, sir,' said he to me,

* "Life of Earl of Vincent," i., 352.

‘when they drank to them, they gave a familiar nod with their heads, quite incompatible with my ideas of respect and propriety.’”

“This incident reminded me,” adds Captain Brenton, “that the Marquis of Wellesley, when he went out with me to Cadiz in the *Donegal*, complained that the nodding of the head, in taking wine at dinner, instead of the well-bred, but old-fashioned bow, was growing into a vile habit among young people.”

Lord Blakeney never dined with his subordinates, but frequently joined them in a tavern carousal. His favourite beverage was punch, an inordinate use of which brought on an alarming paralytic seizure.

Against this anecdote may be mentioned one often related by Mr. Savory, of Bond Street:—A friend of his, a baronet, on his return home from a convivial party, was seized with paralysis, and suddenly deprived of speech, and power of moving one side of his body. Either from feelings of desperation, or an impulse of aberration, the gentleman had a bottle of port wine brought to his bed-side, and, having finished it, he turned with great composure on his side and went to sleep. That gentleman lived long after, his intellect wholly unimpaired, his speech restored, and his general health as good as ever it was; and

he long enjoyed his bottle or two of port wine with apparent impunity.* But this, it must be admitted, was a very exceptionable case.

Although Canon Kingsley did not hesitate to declare publicly that he was not "a total abstainer," he was an earnest, and zealous champion of moderation. Excess in any form or shape was an abhorrence to him, and an evil against which he eloquently inveighed.† Indeed, that he was looked up to as a powerful and influential antagonist against intemperance may be gathered from the fact that in April, 1873, he was specially asked to preach for the Temperance Society in Westminster Abbey, on which occasion, after speaking of Sunday drinking and some of its preventable causes, and of how far behind the Greeks and Romans we are in that education, and recreation, for the masses which the higher orders in England derive from works of art and objects of beauty, he pleaded in the most touching and pathetic language for the opening of public galleries on Sunday afternoons:—"In such a world as this, governed by a Being who has made sunshine and flowers, and green grass, and the song of birds, and happy human smiles, and who would educate them by His human children from the cradle to the grave—will you grudge any

* "His Letters and Memories of his Life," 1877, i., 276.

particle of that education, even any harmless substitute for it, to those spirits in prison whose surroundings too often tempt them, from the cradle to the grave, to fancy that the world is composed of bricks and iron, and governed by inspectors and policemen? Preach to those spirits in prison, but let them have besides some glimpses of the splendid fact that outside their prison-house is a world which God—not man—has made; wherein grows that tree of knowledge which is like the tree of life, and that they have a right to some such share of its beauty, and its wonder, and its rest, for their own health of body and soul, and for the health of their children and for them."

Although it is true Canon Kingsley on another occasion spoke of the "teetotal movement with extreme dread," he at the same time expressed his "horror of our English drunkenness that produced it," he fearing that "the spread of teetotalism would beget that subtlest of sins—spiritual pride, and Pharisaism." To cure the sin of drink, which has long been such a wretched blot on many a home, he maintained that the poor man should have wholesome beer, that landlords, magistrates, and householders should make a stand against the increasing number of public-houses by refusing licences to fresh public-houses,

and, above all, by withholding spirit licenses. In short, he argued that "he saw no hope for country parishes unless the number of public-houses could be legally restricted by the area of the parish, and the amount of population, to the lowest possible number, and those, he said, must be placed under the most vigilant police superintendence, especially in the outlying districts, where they are nests of poachers and bad characters, and utterly ruinous to the boys, girls, and young men who frequent them from the moment they leave school.*

Field Marshal Sir George Pollock was very hospitable, almost to the last day of his life, and was often to be seen at the table of some old familiar friend. He was very temperate—almost abstemious in his way of living—and was with difficulty to be persuaded to take even the very moderate quantity of wine that was necessary for the support of his strength. "I remember," writes Sir John Kaye, "telling him that Lord Combermere had said that the Duke of Wellington would have lived longer if he had taken more wine. He laughed and answered, 'I dare say.' But I don't think the story was lost upon him."

The late Earl Shaftesbury, although he never lost an opportunity of enforcing temperance, and

* *Ibid.* i., 276.

spoke strongly upon the effects of drunkenness, was not himself at any period of his life a total abstainer. "I am worse than a drunkard," he would say, playfully. "I am a moderate drinker." On one occasion, at the Dorset County Friendly Society, June 11th, 1868, speaking at a banquet, he referred in pleasant humour to the time-honoured custom of health-drinking:—

"I have seen much of these public festivals, and I know the unanimity and good feeling which they create. I know the harmony they produce. I know how many prejudices have been removed, how many quarrels and animosities have been made up, by meeting at the convivial dinner table. And I know a very old custom, which seems to have been going out of late, but which I am glad to see is being revived—the custom of drinking a glass of wine with your fellow man. It is one of the wisest institutions which appears to have been framed for conviviality, and for promoting good feeling one towards another. It is framed on the highest system of policy. I have known many a quarrel made up between men who had not exchanged words for years, but who, meeting at the dinner table, and one asking the other to take a glass of wine with him, they had become friends to the hour of their death. Therefore, I say, never give up the convivial system. Only take

it, as you should every other means of enjoyment, in moderation."

Charles Darwin drank very little wine, but was revived by the little he did drink. He had a horror of drinking, and constantly warned his boys that anyone might be led into drinking too much. "I remember," writes his son, "in my innocence as a small boy, asking him if he had ever been tipsy, and he answered very gravely that he was ashamed to say he had once drunk too much at Cambridge. I was much impressed, so that I know now the place where the question was asked."

CHAPTER IV.

WATER-DRINKING.

Sydney Smith—Richard Owen Cambridge—John Foster—Matthew Henry—Edmund Burke—Richard Cobden—John Bright—Warren Hastings—Sir Francis Burdett—Haydon—Wm. Cobbett—Erasmus Darwin—General Havelock—General Elliott—Lord Heathfield—General Sir W. F. Williams—General Sir Richard Dacres—John Wesley—Thomas Chatterton—Wordsworth—Bishop Warburton—Dr. Livingstone—Samuel Morley—Dr. Pye Smith—Dr. Guthrie—Norman Macleod—Horne Tooke—Prof. Rolleston—John Dalton—George Cruikshank.

THE rapid advancement of the temperance movement in recent years has been powerfully instrumental in checking the extravagant excesses, as noticed in the previous chapter, which characterized the drinking habits at the close of the past, and commencement of the present century. The many noted examples of eminent men, too, who have nearly, if not altogether, abstained from alcoholic liquors, have always

attracted interest as proving that physical hard work, and deep mental exertion, are not dependent on stimulants of this kind for support. Such instances have been freely quoted by advocates of total abstinence, but, although it is true the statesman, soldier, and missionary may in some cases, as will be seen in the present chapter, dispense completely with alcoholic drink of any kind, it is impossible to say how many, on the other hand, would have succumbed without it.

Thoroughly characteristic is the following letter of Sydney Smith to his daughter, Lady Holland, written in the year 1828, in which he gives her a glowing picture of the advantages of leaving off wine. Indeed, it might have been written by a zealous advocate of the temperance movement of the present day :—

“Many thanks for your kind anxiety respecting my health. I not only was never better, but never half so well; indeed, I find I have been very ill all my life, without knowing it.

“Let me state some of the goods arising from abstaining from all fermented liquors.

“First,—Sweet sleep. Having never known what sweet sleep was, I sleep like a baby or a plough-boy. If I wake, no needless terrors, no black visions of life, but pleasing hopes and recollections. Holland House, past and to come! If

I dream, it is not of lions and tigers, but of Easter dues and tithes.

“Secondly,—I can take longer walks, and make greater exertions, without fatigue. My understanding is improved, and I comprehend political economy. I see better without wine and spectacles than when I used both. Only one evil ensues from it. I am in such extravagant spirits that I must lose blood, or look out for some one who will bore or depress me. Pray leave off wine—the stomach is quite at rest, no heartburn, no pain, no distention.”

Popular in society, in the last century, was Richard Owen Cambridge, who, according to Madame D’Arblay, had “the best stock of stories she almost ever heard.” He was a total abstainer from wine, thus setting an example of sobriety to the hard-working squires in his neighbourhood, a feature of his character to which Lord Chesterfield thus refers:—“*Cantabrigius*,” writes his lordship, in a paper deprecatory of intemperance, “drinks nothing but water, and rides more miles in a year than the keenest sportsman. The former keeps his head clear, the latter his body in health. His penetration makes him discover, and divest himself of the follies of mankind, which his wit enables him to expose with the truest ridicule, though always without personal offence.”

The clever essayist, and deep thinker, John Foster, was a water-drinker, the value of which beverage he was always ready to extol. Writing to those whose welfare he had at heart, he says : "If I were with you I should set you an example of temperance which you would find it a piece of self-denial to imitate. I still possess what may be called invariable health ; my diet continues of the same inexpensive kind ; water is still my drink. I congratulate myself on the superiority in this respect which I possess, in a season of difficulty, over many that I see. I could, if necessary, live with philosophic complacency on bread and water, on herbs, or on sour milk with the Tartars." In spite of his abstemious habits, John Foster reached his seventy-third year, and when failing health prevented his preaching, he employed himself chiefly in preparing works for the press.

Like Foster, Matthew Henry, the distinguished commentator, abstained from all intoxicating liquors, and strongly enjoined others on Christian principles to do the same, urging them "not to eat anything that cometh of the vine, 'from the kernel to the husk.'"

The great philanthropist, John Howard, in advising the entire prohibition of all intoxicating liquors in prisons as fraught with benefit, thus wrote :—"I am satisfied my ideas are contrary to the present fashionable mode of prescriptions,

which I am persuaded confirms the habit of drinking strong liquors, both in town and country, but may I not hope that the opinions of medical gentlemen will in time alter as much upon this subject, as I have seen in their treatment of the small-pox."

In opposition to Dr. Johnson's gradation of liquors, "claret for boys, port for men, brandy for heroes," Edmund Burke one day caused merriment by saying, "give me claret, for I like to be a boy, and partake of the honest hilarity of youth." But, at a later period of life, especially when exhausted by mental exertion, or attacks of indigestion arising from close application, he was accustomed to take large quantities of water as hot as could be drank;—"warm water," said he, "sickens, but *hot* water stimulates." In allusion partly to this habit, says Mr. Prior,* "the writer of a piece in imitation of 'Retaliation,' who applies the different kinds of wine, as Goldsmith had done dishes, to his characters—as port to Johnson, champagne to Garrick, burgundy to Reynolds, says of the orator:—

"To Burke a pure libation bring,
Fresh drawn from pure *Castalian* spring;
With true oak the goblet bind,
Fit emblem of his patriot mind;
Let Clio as his taster sip,
And Hermes hand it to his lip."

* "Life of Burke," 1854, 469-70.

Richard Cobden was another water-drinker, and a somewhat enthusiastic advocate of temperance, for he says :—"Nobody has more faith than I have in the truth of the teetotal doctrine, both in a physical, and moral point of view. I have acted upon the principle that fermented and distilled drinks are useless for sustaining strength, and the more work I have had to do the more I have resorted to the pump and teapot. As for the moral bearings of the question, it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that all other reforms together would fail to confer as great blessings upon the community, as that of weaning them from intoxicating drinks." Indeed, how strong Cobden's feelings were on the subject may be gathered from the following letter :—

"Every day's experience tends, more and more, to confirm me in my opinion that the temperance cause lies at the foundation of all social, and political, reform. It is vain to seek, by the extension of the franchise, or by free trade, or by any other means, to elevate the labouring masses. In fact, their destiny is in their own hands, and they will, as a class, be elevated or depressed in the social scale in proportion to the extent of their virtues or vices. They are, therefore, the truest friends of the working millions who are labouring in the cause of temperance, and it is a

gratifying fact that the ablest, and most persevering, of its advocates have been found amongst their ranks."

Like Cobden, John Bright was a total abstainer, and was proud of drinking the health of his friends in a beverage which he would boastingly bring to the notice of those present as much more ancient than wine, and much more wholesome. But he never marred the enjoyments of others who did not think as himself, and was always ready to indulge in some happy, and good-natured, remark.

Although the table of Warren Hastings was always supplied with the most delicate viands, his own diet was simple in the extreme. He was a great water-drinker, and so fastidious in the quality of the beverage that he would send for it when "in London from a considerable distance to the spring near the barracks adjoining Kensington Gardens."* Indeed, it is said that he enjoyed a glass of good water more than anything else, and that while those around him were drinking expensive wines, he would equally relish his simple beverage.

Haydon, the painter, tells us in his "Autobiography" that Sir Francis Burdett was generally the picture of health. "I asked him,"

* "Memoirs of Warren Hastings," iii., 542.

he says, "if he lived in any particular manner. He said never. He used the bath, not regularly, but often, drank no wine, except when he dined out, and was always better without it. He did not live by rule, and conformed to society, but frequent baths, no wine, and hunting agreed with him."

Haydon further gives us his experience at a Birmingham party, where all present were water-drinkers. He says:—"Dined at dear honest John Sturge's, and spent a very pleasant evening. They were all teetotalers except me, and John Sturge. I could not have believed so pleasant an evening could have passed without a glass of port. At the conclusion I took one glass, and that was all." But he takes care to add—"I felt weak on arriving home, and ordered my negus."

Cobbett was a warm temperance advocate, and has given us a somewhat amusing, but severe, summary of his views of after-dinner drinking. "A man that cannot pass an evening without drink," he says, "merits the name of a sot. Why should there be drink for the purpose of carrying on conversation? Women stand in need of no drink to stimulate them to converse, and I have a thousand times admired their patience in sitting quietly at their work, while their husbands are engaged in the same room with bottles, and

glasses, before them, thinking nothing of the expense, and still less of the shame, which the distinction reflects upon them. We have to thank the women for many things, and particularly for their strictly sober habits. Men drive them from the table as if they said to them, 'You have had enough; food is sufficient for you. But we must remain to fill ourselves with drink, and to talk in language which your ears ought not to endure.' When women are getting up to retire from the table, men rise in honour of them; but they take special care not to follow their excellent example. The practice has been ascribed to a desire to leave them to themselves. But why should they be left to themselves? Their conversation is always the most lively, while their persons are generally the most agreeable objects. I like to see young men especially follow them out of the room, and prefer their company to that of the sots who are left behind."

"In the midst of a society," further writes William Cobbett, "where wine or spirits are considered of a little more value than water, I have lived two years without either, and with no other drink than water except when I found it convenient to obtain milk. Not an hour's illness, not a headache for an hour, not the smallest ailment, not a restless night, not a drowsy morn-

ing, have I known during these two famous years of my life."

Erasmus Darwin had a violent aversion to spirits of any kind. It was the general opinion at the time of his death that a glass of brandy might have saved his life, for its effect would have been specially effective from his utter disuse of spirits. But such, indeed, was the abhorrence in which he held them that it is probable no entreaties could have induced him to swallow even a small quantity medicinally, although such a dose might have proved restoring.*

Another illustrious advocate of abstinence was General Havelock, who, from the time when he was a captain in the 13th Light Infantry, took a warm interest in the promotion of temperance among the English soldiers in India. In his "Narrative of the War in Afghanistan" he gives an interesting account of the noble conduct of the troops engaged in the storming of Ghuznee, which, he tells us, may in "a great degree be attributed to the fact of the European soldiers having received no spirit rations since the 8th of July (the place was captured on the 23rd), and having found no intoxicating liquor among the plunder of Ghuznee. Since then it has been found that troops can make forced marches of fifty miles

* See "Annual Register," 1804, 789.

without the aid of rum, behaving after success with a forbearance and humanity unparalleled in history. Let it not henceforth be argued that distilled spirits are an indispensable portion of a soldier's ration." It may be added that Havelock continued to maintain his temperance principles, and, although in the advance of Cawnpore he ordered porter to be served to the troops after an exhausting march, and long fast, and in the presence of a numerous foe, the issue of the experiment was so unsatisfactory that the order was not renewed.

Then there was the famous defender of Gibraltar, General Elliott (afterwards Lord Heathfield), who abstained from alcoholic liquors. And General Sir W. F. Williams, the hero of Kars, thus gives his experience:—"I am indebted to a gracious Providence for preservation in very unhealthy climates; but I am satisfied that a resolution, early formed and steadily persevered in, never to take spirituous liquors, has been a means of my escaping diseases by which multitudes have fallen around me. Had not the Turkish army of Kars been literally 'a cold water army,' I am persuaded they never would have performed the achievements which crowned them with glory."

Valuable and interesting is the testimony of

General Sir Richard Dacres as to his water-drinking experiences:—"Since I have become a teetotaler I have gone through great fatigue in hot climates. I have crossed the Atlantic, come here to the Crimea, been exposed to disease and some discomfort, and I have never been sick, or had even a short attack of diarrhoea. I ascribe this to water. But I am a temperate eater also. What I began with as an example I now continue, as I consider I am much better without beer, wine, etc., both in a religious and worldly point of view, and I shall continue as I am to my life's end."

As is well known, John Wesley was a man of more than ordinary self-denial and abstinence, and a passage in one of his sermons informs us that for three or four years he lived upon potatoes alone. Although, as has been stated, he advised preachers, after the fatigues of a day's work, to take a little warm ale before going to bed, he was a habitual water-drinker himself. Among the rules of health which he enjoined may be quoted the subjoined:—"Water is the wholesomest of all drinks, quickens the appetite, and strengthens the digestion most. Strong, and more especially spirituous, liquors are a certain, though slow, poison. Experience shows there is seldom any danger in leaving them off all at once." Anyhow, Wesley lived to a good old age, and the continued

practice of water-drinking evidently suited him, for it was not till the eighty-fifth year of his age that he perceived any diminution of strength, either of body or mind. Arrived at this age he writes:—"I am not so agile as I was in times past. I do not run or walk so fast as I did. My sight is a little decayed. I find some little decay in my memory, but I do not find any decay in my hearing, smell, taste, or appetite, nor do I feel any such thing as weariness, either in travelling or preaching." It is not surprising that Wesley has been often quoted as a striking instance of a man, who was an ascetic as far as the luxuries of life were concerned.

Chatterton, as already noticed, was temperate even to abstemiousness in food as well as in drink, and oftentimes carried his abstinence to a dangerous extent. The same peculiarity was noticeable in his early life, when occasionally he would neglect both food and drink in the pursuit of knowledge. At times, it is said, he became so absorbed in his studies as to lose consciousness of all that was going on around him, and, after being repeatedly addressed, would start and ask what they were talking about. Such moody abstractions were, we are told, "but the preoccupation of his mind with some great pregnant thought."*

* "Chatterton," Daniel Wilson, 217.

Dr. Pye Smith, the eminent writer on Scriptural geological subjects, was an ultra abstainer during the latter part of his life. To a friend from whom he received a present of wine, intended to invigorate his health, he wrote the following letter:—"It would be rude and ungrateful to me to decline receiving your very kind present, for which I return my respectful thanks, and, I assure you that, if the time should ever arrive when the use of wine shall be prescribed to me as a tonic, or upon any other sound medical principle, I shall employ the sherry of extraordinary excellence with an especial recollection of your generosity.

"But this your kindness lays me under a necessity of acknowledging that I have for more than seven years seen it my duty to abstain not only from spirits, but from wine and malt liquors, for several reasons. It is not spirits only, but other inebriating beverages, which work such awful ruin upon all classes of the British population, bringing down to temporal and eternal ruin countless thousands of our countrymen. Health, and strength, and length of life, are more probably maintained by totally refraining from these substances than by any using of them. Of course, where they are medicinally needful they ought to be used, but *as medicine*, and not habitually."

But as time went on Dr. Pye Smith became

more rigid in his views, and the following anecdote is told of his last illness :—"His inflexible habit of abstinence yielded not. He might be said to exemplify 'the ruling passion strong in death.' A medical friend, on perceiving a rapid diminution of power, recommended a slight infusion of brandy in the water beverage. This proposal being conveyed by writing to the eye of the doctor, he turned to his wife and emphatically said, '*Never*, my dear. I charge you, if such remedy be proposed when I am incompetent to refuse, let me rather die than swallow the liquid.' "*

Wordsworth, who avowed himself to be "a simple water-drinking bard," was a man who was equally plain in his fare and very unlike the poets before and after his time. Even Sir Walter Scott (whose sober habits have been incidentally alluded to in the previous chapter), when staying with Wordsworth at Rydal Mount, had not unfrequently to hie him to the nearest public-house. And yet Wordsworth could give a graphic picture of the effect of wine; and, as Mr. Myers has observed in his monograph on the poet, "the poet of the 'Waggoner'"—who, himself an habitual water-drinker, has so gloriously described the glorification which the prospect of nature receives in a half-intoxicated brain—"may justly claim that he can enter into all genuine pleasures

* See "Medway's Memoirs."

even of an order which he declines for himself. With anything that is false or artificial he cannot sympathize, nor with such faults as baseness, cruelty, rancour, which seem contrary to human nature itself; but in dealing with faults of mere *weakness* he is far less strait-laced than many less virtuous men."

According to Bishop Newton, William Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester, was so devoted to his studies as to deny himself most indulgences, and hence became "a singular example, not only of temperance, but even of abstinence, in eating and drinking;" and yet, he adds, "his spirits were not lowered or exhausted, but were rather raised and increased by his low living." Although at one time of his life he speaks of having diminished his care for eating and drinking, he was always noted for his temperance; but he is supposed, by his extraordinary application in early life, to have laid the foundation "of his subsequent giddiness and premature decay of intellect."

In spite of his arduous life, Dr. Livingstone was a water-drinker. "I have acted on the principle of total abstinence," he was wont to say, "from all alcoholic liquors during more than twenty years. My individual opinion is that the most severe labours or privations may be undergone without alcoholic stimulus, because those of us

who have endured the most had nothing else than water, and not always enough of that."

Although Samuel Morley had always regarded intemperance as an unmitigated evil, and from his youth up had never lost an opportunity of recommending not only temperance, but total abstinence, especially to working men, he had not been a total abstainer himself. But, about the year 1857, he was addressing a large meeting of working men, and was pressing upon them the importance of being total abstainers, when a labouring man rose up and, interrupting him in his speech, said—"Do you go without yourself? I dare say, if the truth's known, you take your glass or two of wine after dinner and think no harm of it. Now, sir, *do* you go without yourself?"

"This rather shut me up for an instant," said Mr. Morley, when telling the story, "but when I looked round at those poor fellows whom I had been asking to give up what they regarded—no matter how erroneously—as their only luxury, I had my answer ready pretty quickly. 'No,' I said, 'but I will go without from this hour.'"

From that time forth he never touched wine or any other intoxicating beverage again except for a short period after an illness and under imperative orders from his physician.* "As a matter

* "Life of Samuel Morley," E. Hodder, 139-40.

of fact," adds Mr. Hodder, "Samuel Morley had never been in the habit of taking his glass or two of wine after dinner, but an occasional glass with his meals he enjoyed, and was under the impression that it did him good."

The cause which induced Dr. Guthrie to become a total abstainer was unexpected, and is one of those striking instances of how the most unlooked for events have occasionally influenced many a human life. "In a journey in Ireland in 1840," to quote his own story, "the weather was cold with a lashing rain. By the time we reached a small inn we were soaking with water outside, and as those were the days not of tea and toast, but of toddy drinking, we thought the best way was to soak ourselves with whisky inside. Accordingly we rushed into the inn, ordered warm water, and got our tumblers of toddy. Out of kindness to the car-driver, we called him in. He was not very well clothed ; indeed, he rather belonged in that respect to the order of my ragged school in Edinburgh. He was soaking with wet, and we offered him a good rummer of toddy. We thought that what was 'sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander;' but the car-driver was not such a gander as we, like geese, took him for. He would not taste it.

"'Why,' we asked, 'what objection have you got?'

"Said he, 'Please your riv'ence, I am a teetotaler, and I won't taste a drop of it.'

"Well, that stuck in my throat, and went (in another sense than drink, though) to my head. Here was a humble, uneducated Roman Catholic carman. 'Oh,' I said, 'if that man can deny himself this indulgence, why should not I, a Christian minister?' I remembered that, and I have ever remembered it to the honour of Ireland. I have often told the story, and thought of the example set by that poor Irishman for our people to follow. I carried home the remembrance of it with me to Edinburgh. That circumstance, along with the scenes in which I was called to labour daily for years, made me a teetotaler."*

His missionary labour among the lapsed classes of Dalkeith induced Norman Macleod to take up seriously the drink question. Drunkenness he found was, as usual, the root-evil of most of the misery, and he strained every effort to grapple with its power. He did not join any temperance society, but, in order to help those he was trying to reform, he entered with them for a considerable time into a compact of total abstinence. The result of these experiences, it may be remembered, he afterwards gave to the public in a tract entitled "A Plea for Temperance."

In his drinking habits Horne Tooke was

* "Life of Rev. Dr. Guthrie."

decidedly eccentric. Sometimes he confined himself for a whole month to water, and then would descant in eloquent terms on the advantages to be derived by those who drank freely of the pure and unadulterated element. At such times he would boast of his early abstemiousness in the language of Shakespeare—

In my youth I never did apply
Hot and rebellious liquors to my blood ;

* * * * *

Therefore my age is as a lusty winter—

Frosty, but kindly.*

Indeed, in his extreme moments of sobriety,† he would violently exclaim against wine, and indulge in commendations of Mahomet, who, with a code infinitely inferior to that of Christianity, had been fortunate enough to prohibit and prevent two great evils of society—drunkenness and gaming. If his own language was not powerful to convince, he would quote from “Othello” (Act ii., sc. 3)—“O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name, let us call thee devil! O that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains! That we should, with joy, revel, pleasure, and applause, transform ourselves into beasts!”

But by a strange contradiction at another time he would be just as eloquent in the praise of wine,

* “As You Like It,” Act ii., sc. 3.

† “Life of John Horne Tooke,” A. Stephens, ii., 453-4.

finding classical authority for its use and enjoyment, and would ask what was the good of fortune without wine? He would then maintain that "two excellent poets, Æschylus and Buchanan, could never write verses without being stimulated by the juice of the grape, that the lyric poet Alcæus was denominated after his favourite pursuit, that Homer freely recommends this species of indulgence in his immortal lines, and that old Ennius found himself incapacitated without it." Anyhow, the example of Ennius had but one recommendation, for he is supposed to have died of the gout in consequence of his frequent intoxication. But, in justice to Horne Tooke, it should be stated that for many years before his death he became extremely abstemious.

Among further water-drinkers may be mentioned John Dalton and the late Professor Rolleston, who took an active part in the temperance movement.

When about fifty-six years of age George Cruikshank became an abstainer, and henceforth devoted himself with all the energies of his nature to the duty of advocating, by his pencil and his practice, the cause of total abstinence. He had still thirty years to live, and in the enthusiasm of his new creed he "too often weighted his productions with an unpalatable moral."*

* "Dict of National Biography," xiii., 256.

"Fairy Library" (published in 1853-4), a series of books in which he endeavoured to repeat the earlier successes of his illustrations to Grimm, he turned the time-honoured stories into "temperance tales"—a step which not unnaturally provoked the criticism of an old friend and admirer, Charles Dickens, who, in "Household Words," warmly remonstrated against these "Frauds on the Fairies."

Dickens asks what would become of our great books if this kind of liberty were to be tolerated? "Imagine a total abstinence edition of 'Robinson Crusoe,' with the rum left out. Imagine a peace edition with the gunpowder left out and the rum left in. Imagine a vegetarian edition with the goat's flesh left out. Imagine a Kentucky edition to introduce a flogging of that 'tarnal old nigger Friday twice a week. Imagine an Aborigines Protection Society edition to deny the cannibalism, and make Robinson Crusoe embrace the amiable savages whenever they landed. Robinson would be edited out of his island in a hundred years, and the island would be swallowed up in the editorial ocean."

Poor George Cruikshank could not but smart from the effects of Dickens's article, but he was not the man to feel a blow and sit down under it. He persevered in advocating, by all the talent and originality he possessed, the total abstinence

movement, and the many clever cartoons he drew on the subject are too well known to need more than incidental mention here. But temperance did not spoil him, for even at eighty he was as ready to dance a hornpipe as to sing his favourite ballad of "Lord Bateman" in character for the benefit of his friends, and he never tired of dilating on the advantages of water-drinking. "He was," says one who knew him well, "to sum up, a light-hearted, merry, and, albeit a teetotaler, an essentially jolly old gentleman, full physically of humorous action, imitatively illustrating the anecdotes he related."

CHAPTER V.

SMOKING HABITS.

Lord Lytton—Archbishop Whately—Lord Clarendon—Lord Brougham—Lord Beaconsfield—Lord John Russell—Duke of Bridgewater—Lord Morpeth—Duke of Devonshire—Sir James Outram—David Cox—Captain Marryat—Thomas Campbell—T. Moore—Fielding—Addison—Sir Walter Scott—Charles Lamb—Dr. Parr—Dean Aldrich—Rev. Robert Hall—Douglas Jerrold—Professor Wilson—John Gibson Lockhart—John Dalton—Lord Byron—Henry Fawcett—Thackeray—Edmund Kean—Charles Dickens—Thomas Henry Buckle—Charles Kingsley—Thomas Carlyle—Charles Darwin—Lord Westbury—John Bright—Cowper—Shelley—Wordsworth—Keats—Thomas Fuller—Dr. Adam Clarke—Dr. Johnson.

ACCORDING to the late Lord Lytton, "he who doth not smoke hath either known no great griefs, or refuseth himself the softest consolation next to that which comes from heaven." Exaggerated as this statement may be, it must be acknowledged that there are few habits which for popularity can be compared to smoking in our own and other countries. Indeed, it has been

remarked that it embraces the circumference of the globe, from the savage to the most refined, and includes every climate from Siberia to the Equator, and from the Equator to the extreme South. As a sedative for over brain-work, tobacco has naturally been popular among our leading men, having found numerous advocates among the dignitaries of the Church, in addition to having afforded a comforting and cheering solace to soldier, and sailor, when called upon to submit to many a severe privation. Thus, speaking of the clergy, it may be noticed that the first episcopal smoker in this country was Dr. Richard Fletcher, successively Bishop of Worcester, Bristol, and London, and who was specially selected to attend on Mary Queen of Scots, at Fotheringay, on the day of her execution, Feb. 8, 1587. From one account we learn that his death resulted from his "immoderate taking of tobacco." Archbishop Laud was accused by the Puritans of being too fond of smoking; and, coming down to later times, Archbishop Whately was a great smoker, his pipe, when its little volcano was extinct, serving him for a book-marker. In summer-time he might be seen of an evening in St. Stephen's Green enjoying his pipe, often meanwhile engaged in earnest thought.* Fre-

* See Fitzpatrick's "Memoirs of Archbishop Whately."

quently, too, in winter he was in the habit of walking along the Donnybrook Road smoking vigorously, his dogs occasionally accompanying him in his constitutional strolls.

In the death of Lord Clarendon, in 1870, society lost a most enthusiastic patron of the "weed." During his official business he generally smoked; and the Foreign Office, while he was there, was always pervaded with a strong aroma of cigars. In fact, he indulged in his favourite habit all day and almost all night, for his despatches were frequently written between midnight and daybreak. The journals of the day did not fail to allude to his fondness for smoke, and in a society paper (the *Period*) was published an amusing fancy sketch of a Cabinet Council meeting, at which the following desultory talk was supposed to have taken place:—

The First Lord of the Treasury: "Our conversation grows frivolous and flippant. I object to allusions to *Lothair*; it is a book which Mr. Goldwin Smith disapproves, and so do I. Its author, in my opinion, is an unscrupulous caricaturist."

The Foreign Secretary: "Yes, being a leading politician, he should have written a homily on Homer, or an exegesis of Exodus. But do you know what literary work I have in progress?

Murray has offered twenty thousand pounds for it."

The Privy Seal: "I had no idea publishers were so liberal. I shall certainly publish my reminiscences."

The Postmaster: "I certainly would. But tell us, Clarendon, what's your subject?"

The Foreign Secretary: "Tobacco and tobacco-nists of all nations. Diplomacy is entirely a question of the weed. I can always settle a question if I know beforehand whether the plenipotentiary smokes cavendish, or Latakia, or shag. Tobacco, as a key to diplomacy, is my theme."

Lord Brougham found smoking an invaluable relief amidst his busy labours. On leaving the Court of King's Bench, he would take one pipe before going to the House of Commons, where, after having spoken for two or three hours, charming his hearers by his glow of wit and wisdom, he would return home, smoking another pipe before composing himself to write an article for the *Edinburgh Review*. But, it was asserted that, on donning his Court suit at his first *levée* as Lord Chancellor, he laid aside for ever the pipe that hitherto had served him so well.

In his youth, the Earl of Beaconsfield loved the long pipe, and, in one of his letters written to

his brother (Ralph Disraeli), in the year 1830, from Malta, he says :—

“Mashallah! Here I am sitting in an easy chair, with a Turkish pipe six feet long, with an amber mouth-piece and a porcelain bowl. What a revolution! But what if I tell you that I not only have become a smoker, but the greatest smoker in Malta. The fact is that I find it relieves my head. Barrow,* who is here in the ‘Blonde,’ is a most knowing young lieutenant. He informed me the other night (after dinner) he was sure to be made a captain in eighteen months, irresistibly reminding me of John Falconer in ‘Patronage’; has given me a meerschaum, and Anstruther a most splendid Dresden green china, set in silver, an extremely valuable pipe, but there is nothing like a meerschaum.”

An amusing anecdote is told of Lord John Russell, who gave a large reception, to which Mr. Alfred Tennyson was invited. During the evening his lordship, walking amongst his guests, recognized Mr. Tennyson.

“Mr. Tennyson, how d’ye do? Glad to see you. You’ve been travelling in Europe lately, I hear. How did you like Venice? Fine things to be seen in Venice. Did you visit the Bridge of Sighs?”

* Younger son of Sir George Barrow, a Secretary of the Admiralty.

"Yes, my lord."

"And saw all the pictures and works of art in that wonderful city, did you not?"

"I didn't like Venice, my lord."

"Indeed! Why not, Mr. Tennyson?"

"They had no good cigars there, my lord, and I left the place in disgust."

"Indeed! Good evening, Mr. Tennyson."

The Duke of Bridgewater was a great smoker, and smoked far more than he talked. Smoking was his principal evening's occupation when Brindley and Gilbert were pondering with him over the difficulty of raising funds to complete the navigation; and the Duke continued his solitary enjoyment through life. One of the droll habits to which he was addicted was that of rushing out of the room every five minutes, with his pipe in his mouth, to look at the barometer.*

But, it should be remembered that, in years gone by, tobacco was not in fashion as it is nowadays, and hence not generally patronized by the upper ten thousand. "Thus one day," writes Lord William Lennox, "when walking with Lord Morpeth in Piccadilly during a foggy day in November, we met the Duke of Devonshire, and, to my great surprise, with a cigar in his mouth. At this

* Smiles' "Lives of the Engineers," i., 412.

moment Alvanley approached us, and, looking round at the Duke, said—

“‘What! his Grace indulging in a mild Havannah?’

“‘Yes,’ Morpeth replied, ‘his doctor has recommended it on foggy days.’

“‘All very well,’ responded the wit, ‘so long as he does not take to what is called the Virginian weed. Should he indulge in cavendish we should have to “cut Cavendish”!’”*

Although abstemious and regular in his mode of life, Sir James Outram was an inveterate smoker, and Sir F. J. Goldsmid† says that he “never knew any man smoke more than he did; it no doubt did him harm, and was the only point on which we did not agree.”

David Cox, whose life was one of simplicity and moderation, rarely omitted to smoke his *half* cigar, after which “it was his happiness to have his colour-box out, or, if by artificial light, generally his sepia, and setting to work, would make one or two spirited drawings in the course of the evening.” During, too, the many years he made Bettwys-y-Coed his head-quarters, he would often spend his evening in the parlour of the Royal Oak Inn, which in those days was an

* “Celebrities I have known,” i., 148.

† “Biography of James Outram,” ii., 406.

artists' club without any conventionality. Here he would take his cigar—for he never smoked a pipe—and his pint of ale. "There was no racket, no shouting, no fastness, or slang," writes Mr. Solly,* "it was an intelligent, rational, pleasant evening's amusement."

Captain Marryat was not a great smoker, only now and then indulging himself with a cigar, but More much enjoyed his quiet whiff. Fielding was not content to smoke, but chewed, tobacco; and Addison, a great smoker, had a pipe in his mouth at all times at Button's.

After a somewhat eccentric fashion, George Morland, the artist, used to enjoy his pipe. There was an inn at Highgate,† a favourite resort of his, "where the princes and sovereign judges of the whip generally stopped upon their return from the country to refresh themselves and their horses; here Morland used regularly to take his stand, and here, indeed, he was completely at home." Frequently, too, with a pipe in his mouth, he would parade before the door of the house and hail the carriages as they passed in succession before him, and, "from being so well known, he was generally greeted in return by a familiar salute from the postillion."

* "Life of David Cox," 1873, 172.

† See Hassell's *Memoirs* of, 28.

Sir Walter Scott smoked in his carriage, and regularly after dinner, loving both pipes and cigars; and Thomas Campbell was a great lover of the "weed," and Beattie, his biographer, describes his lumbered room, "tobacco pipes, mingled with the literary wares, etc."

According to his own confession, Charles Lamb was "a fierce smoker of tobacco," but as he advanced in years he partially abandoned the habit, and describes himself as resembling "a volcano burnt out, emitting now and then only a casual puff." To throw off a habit he so dearly loved was a hard struggle, and in spite of many resolutions he was frequently lured back by its enchantments. Eventually, finding that his health required him to make a sacrifice of what was perhaps his greatest pleasure, he took his formal leave in a "Farewell Ode to Tobacco," and, in sending a copy of the poem to Wordsworth, he writes—"I have had it in my head to do it these two years, but tobacco stood in its own light when it gave me headaches that prevented my singing its praises. Now that you have got it you have got all my store, for I have absolutely not another line yet." Although severing his connection with tobacco, from necessity rather than choice, Lamb still continued as staunch a friend of it as in years past, and no doubt often

silently longed for the old days when it had been his chief solace in hours clouded with anxious care and sorrow. Some have regarded his valedictory ode as the best offering of the muse at the shrine of tobacco, to which is added an additional interest when we reflect that it was written under a full sense of its truth, the style of which may be gathered from the closing lines :—

For I must (nor let it grieve thee,
Friendliest of plants, that I must) leave thee;
For thy sake, Tobacco, I
Would do anything but die,
And but seek to extend my days
Long enough to sing thy praise.
But, as she who once hath been
A king's consort, is a queen
Ever after, nor will bate
Any tittle of her state,
Though a widow, or divorced,
So I, from thy converse forced,
The old style and name retain,
A right Katherine of Spain,
And a seat, too, 'mongst the joys
Of the blest tobacco boys.
Here, though I by sour physician
Am debarr'd the full fruition
Of thy favours, I may catch
Some collateral sweets, and snatch
Side-long odours that give life
Like glances from a neighbour's wife,
And still live in the bye-places,
And the suburbs of thy graces,
And in thy borders take delight
And unconquer'd Canaanite.

In his smoking days Lamb was no epicure in the choice of his tobacco, indulging in the coarsest and strongest kinds. On one occasion, when Dr. Parr—who used only the finest tobacco—saw Lamb puffing furiously away with the strongest tobacco, he quietly laid down his pipe and asked him how he could smoke at such a rate?

But Lamb coolly and laconically replied, “I toiled after it, sir, as some men toil after virtue.”

This is only one of the many well-known anecdotes related of Dr. Parr, whose love of tobacco has long since become proverbial. One evening he was to dine at the house of a certain friend who previously informed his wife of the doctor’s passion for his pipe. The lady was much mortified by this intimation, and indignantly replied—

“I tell you I don’t care a fig for Dr. Parr’s Greek; he shan’t smoke here.”

“My dear,” answered her husband, “he must smoke; he is allowed to do so everywhere.”

“Excuse me, he shall not smoke here. Leave it to me, my dear, I’ll manage it.”

The dinner was served, and in due course the doctor called for pipes.

“Pipes!” screamed the good lady in apparent astonishment, “pipes! for what purpose?”

“Why, to smoke, madam.”

"Oh, my dear doctor, I can't have pipes here. You'll spoil my room. My curtains will smell of tobacco for a week."

"Not smoke!" exclaimed the angry doctor; "why, madam, I have smoked in better houses."

"Perhaps so, sir," replied the lady, calmly, adding, "I shall be most happy to show you the rites of hospitality, but you cannot be allowed to smoke."

"Then, madam," said Dr. Parr, "then, madam, I must say, madam—"

"Sir! sir! are you going to be rude?"

"I must say, madam," he continued, "you are the *greatest* tobacco-stopper in all England."

This retort produced a loud laugh, after which he retired to enjoy the pleasures of his pipe. On the other hand, he often represented, as an instance of the homage which rank and beauty delight to pay to talent and learning, that ladies of the highest rank condescended to the office of lighting his pipe. He further used to tell how, when once honoured by an invitation to dinner at Carlton House, the Prince of Wales insisted upon his taking his pipe as usual. As a guest, too, he was frequently entertained by the Duke of Sussex, who showed his thoughtful condescension by not only allowing him to smoke, but by smoking with him.

It was in the company of Dr. Parr that the

Rev. Robert Hall, famous as a scholar and preacher, learnt to smoke. On being found one day by an astonished friend blowing an immense cloud of smoke, he calmly replied, "O, I am only qualifying myself for the society of a Doctor of Divinity, and this" (holding up his pipe) "is my test of admission." A member of his congregation tried to expostulate with him as to the injurious effects of this habit, and left with him a copy of Dr. Adam Clarke's pamphlet "On the Use and Abuse of Tobacco." But in a few days it was returned with this message—"Thank you, sir, for Adam Clarke's pamphlet. I can't refute his arguments, and I can't give up smoking."

Dean Aldrich's passion for smoking is illustrated by the well-known story of a student, who betted that he would find him smoking at ten o'clock in the morning, and who lost the bet because Aldrich was not smoking, but filling his pipe. It may be remembered that his famous smoking catch first appeared in the "Pleasant Musical Companion" (1726), to be sung by four men smoking their pipes, but more difficult to sing than diverting to hear.

Greatly did John Dalton enjoy a pipe after his heavy day's work in the class-room or laboratory, or, when taking his well-earned weekly holiday with the Bowling Club, at the County Tavern, his colloquial faculty being at its very best when over a pipe of tobacco. Oftentimes when, on account

of his colour-blindness, he was prevented joining in a rubber—not knowing a king of spades from a knave of hearts—he would sit and talk, blowing his big cloud from the fragrant weed. He was, in truth, a thorough smoker, and seems to have had a feeling almost bordering on contempt for those who did not appreciate tobacco. Thus in his correspondence he tells us of his introduction to Mr. Davy (afterwards Sir Humphry), and that he found him “a very agreeable and intelligent young man,” but he presently adds that “the principal failing in his character is that he does not smoke.” He speaks of a visit to Dr. Rees, “that worthy philosopher of the old school,” and notes with satisfaction that “his evening lucubrations are duly scented with genuine Virginia.”

Lord Byron was an enthusiastic admirer of “sublime tobacco,” and wrote a panegyric in its praise,* telling us how it—

From East to West,
Cheers the tar's labours or the Turkman's rest,
Which on the Moslem's ottoman divides
His hours, and rivals opium and his brides;
Magnificent in Stamboul, but less grand,
Though not less loved, in Wapping or the Strand;
Divine in hookahs, glorious in a pipe,
When tipp'd with amber, mellow, rich, and ripe—
Like other charmers wooing the caress,
More dazzlingly when daring in full dress,
Yet thy true lovers more admire by far
Thy naked beauties. Give me a cigar!

* “The Island,” canto ii., sect. 19.

Douglas Jerrold puffed away in his leisure moments, and Professor Wilson smoked steadily, while John Gibson Lockhart was seldom without his cigar—an indispensable adjunct to his daily life.

When Henry Fawcett lost his eyesight he “deliberately learnt to smoke as a means of enjoyment; he never worshipped tobacco with the zeal of some devotees, but he thought that it would help to smooth some weary hours,” and in this belief he was not disappointed. His associations with Cambridge call to mind a visit paid by Sir J. W. Kaye some years ago to Dr. Whewell and Professor Sedgwick, when he dined with the former and took tea with the latter. To quote his own words:—“We drank some tea, but conversation flagged. I had heard much of his fund of anecdote, of his vivid memory and choice reminiscences, and I was disappointed. But presently it occurred to me that I had been told he was a great smoker—an impression which the pervading odour of his room amply confirmed. So I said to him, ‘I think, Professor, that you like your pipe in the evening?’

“‘Yes,’ he replied; ‘do you smoke?’

“I answered, ‘I enjoy a smoke.’

“Upon which he got up, brought me a box of cigars, helped me to take off my dress coat, gave me a light smoking robe in its place, rang the

bell, sent away the tea, and called for brandy and water. Then the talk began in earnest. Each in an easy chair, we sat for hours—hours that I shall not easily forget."

Thackeray, who, like many brain-workers, was more or less subject to fits of depression, found relief in his cigar. To quote his own words:—"I vow and believe that the cigar has been one of the greatest creature comforts of my life—a kind companion, a gentle stimulant, an amiable anodyne, a cementer of friendship. May I die if I abuse that kindly weed which has given me so much pleasure."

It is related by a lady that long before "Vanity Fair" was thought of, and when he was only studying how to become a painter, leading a rollicking artist life in Paris, he would often rush into the room where she was sitting, and say, "Polly, lend me a franc for cigars." The same habit of smoking clung to him through life, and when, as he tells us, "he felt anything but gay," the soothing influence of his pipe gave an additional inspiration to his humour. Smokers found in him a zealous advocate, and in his "Fitzboodle Papers" he jocularly defends the practice when assailed by the fair sex. "What is this smoking," he asks, "that it should be considered a crime? I believe in my

heart that women are jealous of it as of a rival. The fact is that the cigar is a rival to the ladies, and their conqueror, too. Do you suppose you will conquer? Look over the wide world, and see that your adversary has overcome it. Germany has been puffing for threescore years; France smokes to a man. Do you think you can keep the enemy out of England? Pshaw! Look at his progress. Ask the club-houses. I, for my part, do not despair to see a bishop lolling out of the Athenæum with a cheroot in his mouth, or, at any rate, a pipe stuck in his shovel hat."

But in "Vanity Fair" Becky Sharp, one of the cleverest of modern delineators, has the courage to confess that she likes smoke, and in the passage below Thackeray has given a skilful touch of her peculiar trait of character:—"Miss Sharp loved the smell of a cigar out of doors beyond everything in the world, and she has just tasted one, too, in the prettiest way possible, and gave a little puff, and a little scream, and a little giggle, and restored the delicacy to the captain, who twirled his moustache and straightway puffed it into a blaze that grewed quite red in the dark plantation, and swore, 'Jove—aw! gad—aw! It's the finest segaw I ever smoked in the world—aw!'"

Many a touching allusion occurs in his works

to his favourite habit, as, for instance, in the "Newcomes":—"Give the colonel his pipe, Clive," said I. "Now, sir, down with you in a sitter's chair, and smoke the sweetest cheroot you ever smoked in your life. My dear, dear old Clive, you need not bear with the campaigner any longer. You may go to bed without this nightmare to-night if you like. You may have your father under your roof again." Charming bits of pathos of this kind betray the novelist's real feelings, who was candid enough to confess that he had smoked up the chimney rather than not at all.

Of the numerous smoking anecdotes told of Thackeray by Mr. Frith, in his "Reminiscences," we may mention one in connection with "The Deanery," a club in Dean Street, Soho, the members being chiefly literary men, artists, lawyers, and such like:—"My friend and I," he says, "entered the Deanery smoking-room, and found a very convivial party, all intimately acquainted seemingly, listening to a song from a gentleman called Mahony, who, under the name of Father Prout, had made himself somewhat famous. By his side sat a big man, to whom I was introduced, and I had the honour of a handshake by the great Thackeray. Someone called on him for a song, and he instantly struck up one

of his own writing, as I was told. No sooner had the applause accorded to it subsided than Thackeray turned to me and said —

“‘ Now then, Frith, you d—d saturnine young academician, sing us a song.’

“I was dumb before this address,” and, he adds, “I often met Thackeray afterwards, but I never gave him an opportunity for renewing his playful attacks.”

Edmund Kean loved his cigar to the last, and a touching anecdote is told of his closing life by Mr. Hawkins * :—“On one occasion, when it was thought that his death was only a matter of a few hours, he, having rallied a little, took advantage of the absence of those who watched him to get out of bed, envelop himself with a racoon’s skin, make his way with great difficulty into the adjoining room, and there to light a cigar. He was persuaded to return to his bed, and he never rose from it afterwards.”

Charles Dickens was a smoker, and has left many entertaining anecdotes of his smoking reminiscences during his travels. In the year 1846 he stayed at Lausanne, and, describing his cottage (Rosemont), he exclaims :—“As to bowers for reading and smoking, there are as many scattered about the grounds as there are

* “Life of Edmund Kean,” ii., 390-1.

in Chalk Farm Tea Gardens, but the Rosemont bowers are really beautiful." In the Blind Institution of Lausanne he was introduced to a young man who had been born deaf and dumb, and who had been stricken blind by an accident when about five years old. Writing of this boy, Dickens says:—"He is very fond of smoking. I have arranged to supply him with cigars during our stay here; so he and I are in amazing sympathy. I don't know whether he thinks I grow them or make them, or produce them by winking, or what; but it gives him a notion that the world in general belongs to me."

In the year 1853 Dickens revisited Lausanne, and found that the poor lad had forgotten him. "Tremendous efforts," he writes, "were made by Hatzel to impress him with an idea of me and the associations belonging to me, but it seemed in my eyes quite a failure, and I much doubt if he had the least perception of his old acquaintance. I left ten francs to be spent in cigars for my old friend. If I had taken one with me I think I could more successfully, than his master, have established my identity."

When staying in Paris, in 1856, Emile de Girardin gave a costly banquet in his honour, to which he thus refers:—"The company being returned to the drawing-room, tables roll in by

unseen agency laden with cigarettes from the Harem of the Sultan, and with cool drinks, in which the flavour of the lemon arrived yesterday from Algeria struggles voluptuously with the delicate orange arrived this morning from Lisbon. After dinner he (Girardin) asked me if I would come into another room and smoke a cigar? On my saying 'Yes,' he coolly opened a drawer containing about five hundred inestimable cigars in prodigious bundles—just as the captain of the robbers in 'Ali Baba' might have gone to a corner of the cave for bales of crocade."

Another distinguished smoker was Thomas Henry Buckle. Although "a very moderate one as compared with many, it was so imperious a necessity with him to have his three cigars every day, that he could neither read, write, nor talk, if forced to forego them, and he was equally uncomfortable should he happen to over-pass the usual hour for indulging in them. As also he could not smoke when walking—the effort being too great for him—he never went to stay in any house where smoking was objected to. But more than one house that had never tolerated a cigar before bore with it for his sake."

On his last travels in the East he still enjoyed his pipe, and Mr. J. A. Longmore, who joined him in his journeys, writing to the *Athenæum*, tells us:—

"It was on board the *Canopus* that I was introduced to him. I found him smoking Latakia out of a large red clay pipe, with an extremely long cherry stalk, which he had found on board the boat, and which he seemed thoroughly to enjoy. Though he smoked continuously during our interview he was by no means solely occupied by that recreation, for he talked nearly as continuously." The vast and rich store of facts, too, which he collected together about smoking were intended to estimate the place, and influence, of tobacco as an element of civilization.

Like Buckle, Charles Kingsley found tobacco a needful sedative. At times, it is said, he would work himself into a sort of white heat over his book, till, too excited to write more, he would calm himself down by a pipe, pacing his grass plot in thought and with long strides. He always used a long and clean *churchwarden*, and these pipes used to be bought a barrellful at a time. They lurked in all sorts of unexpected places. A pipe would suddenly be extracted from a bush in the garden, filled and lighted as if by magic, or one has even been drawn from a whin-bush on the heath, some half-mile from the house. But none was ever smoked which was in any degree foul, and, when there was a vast accumulation of old pipes—enough to fill the barrel—they

were sent back again to the kiln to be rebaked, and returned fresh and new. This gave him a striking simile, which, in "Alton Locke," he puts into the mouth of James Crossthwaite:—"Katie here believes in purgatory, where souls are burnt clean again like bacca pipes."

In "Westward Ho," again, there is a forcible indication of his love of tobacco, for, he writes, "the Indians always carry it with them on their war parties, and no wonder, for when all things were made, none was made better than this, to be a lone man's companion, a bachelor's friend, a hungry man's food, a sad man's cordial, a wakeful man's sleep, and a chilly man's fire; while for stanching of wounds, purging of rheum, and settling of the stomach, there's no herb like unto it under the canopy of heaven."

Carlyle, who was a victim to indigestion, sought refuge in his pipe, having tried all kinds of remedies, but to no purpose. He relates how "a long hairy-eared jackass," as he in somewhat uncomplimentary terms designated an Edinburgh physician, recommended him to take mercury and forego tobacco. But, gaining no improvement by this advice, he resumed his pipe and smoked to the end of his life. One night, when upset by over-work and sleeplessness, he went down to smoke in the back-yard. Mentioning this inci-

dent, he tells us how he "sat down to smoke in his night-shirt. It was one of the beautifullest nights; the half-moon, clear as silver, looked out as from eternity, and the great dawn was streaming up. I felt a remorse, a kind of shudder, at the fuss I was making about a sleepless night, about my sorrow at all, with a life so soon to be absorbed into the great mystery above and around me. Oh, let us be patient! Let us call to God with our silent hearts, if we cannot with our tongues!"

With such grand and lofty sentiments on record, tobacco will never stand in need of apologists to advocate its claims, for, as Carlyle has further added, "tobacco smoke is the one element in which, by our European manners, men can sit silent together without embarrassment, and where no man is bound to speak one word more than he has actually and veritably got to say. Nay, rather every man is admonished and enjoined by the laws of honour, and even of personal ease, to stop short of that point; at all events, to hold his peace and take to his pipe again the instant he has spoke his meaning, if he chance to have any." In these days, too, when the cloture has been found an indispensable necessity for carrying on party government within reasonable hours, such a mode of procedure

would undoubtedly have its advantages. For, as Carlyle adds, "the results of which salutary practice, if introduced into Constitutional Parliaments, might evidently be incalculable."

Smoking Charles Darwin only took to permanently in late years;* and Lord Westbury did not indulge in tobacco till he was over sixty, when he became very fond of smoking cigarettes, from which he thought he derived some comfort.

Although by no means an inveterate smoker, John Bright was fond of the soothing weed, and it is said that when Birmingham gave him its last celebrated welcome with a procession to Aston, the first thing he did on arriving at Small Heath Station was to inquire where he might smoke a cigarette. In his early days, writes Mr. T. Wemyss Reid in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, he was "a frequenter of what is known as the little smoking room at the Reform, and here he and Cobden, Milner Gibson, and Charles Villiers, would often sit of an evening talking over men and things, and at times preparing those political schemes which had so important a bearing upon the destinies of the country."

Of late years, when visiting the Reform Club, "if he fell in with some scientific or literary man in the smoking room, his delight was to wander far away

* See "Life of Charles Darwin."

from the heated greed of political strife. It was then of scientific discoveries, of salmon fishing, of poetry old and new, or of the best English fiction, that he would talk with a freshness and fulness that delighted his auditors. His one cigar smoked—and he always spent a very long time over it—he would glance at the printed telegram to see what was doing down at the House of Commons, then utter a friendly ‘Good night,’ and set off for his lodgings, formerly in Piccadilly, and latterly at the bottom of Hanover Street.”

Cowper was no smoker, and seems to have regarded this habit with no favourable eye. He was on terms of close friendship, however, with several smokers, the Rev. William Bull, Dissenting minister at Olney, being among the number, whom he described as “a man of letters and of genius, who can be lively without levity, and pensive without dejection.” But, he added, “he smokes tobacco. Nothing is perfect! ‘Nihil est ab omni parte beatum!’” Happily, Cowper was not bigoted, as may be gathered from the following letter addressed to his friend Mr. Bull, dated 3rd June, 1783:—

“My greenhouse, planted with myrtles, and where I hear nothing but the pattering of a fine shower and the sound of distant thunder, wants only the fumes of your pipe to make it perfectly

delightful. Tobacco was unknown in the golden age. So much the worse for the golden age. This age of iron or lead would be insupportable without it, and therefore we may reasonably suppose that the happiness of those better days would have been much more improved by the use of it."

His friend, the Rev. John Newton, Rector of St. Mary Woolnoth, was an ardent smoker, writing to whom, he says:—"I have often promised myself a laugh with you about your pipe, but have always forgotten it when I have been writing, and at present I am not much in a laughing humour. You will observe, however, for your comfort and the honour of the same pipe, that it hardly falls within the lines of my censure. You never fumigate the ladies, or force them out of company, nor do you use it as an incentive to hard drinking. Your friends, indeed, have reason to complain that it frequently deprives them of the pleasure of your own conversation, while it leads you either into your study or into your garden, but in all other respects it is as innocent a pipe as can be. Smoke away, therefore, and remember that if one poet has condemned the practice, a better than he, the witty and elegant Hawkins Browne, has been warm in the praises of it."

But Cowper was not always equally lenient when speaking of the pipe, his delicate sense of smell having been offended by vulgar smokers, who probably used bad tobacco, for in "The Task" (Bk. v.) he tells how—

The sturdy churl
Moves right toward the mark, nor stops for aught,
But now and then with pressure of his thumb
T' adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube,
That fumes beneath his nose—the trailing cloud
Streams far behind him, scenting all the air.

Much more severe is he when he finds the unsavoury whiff in close proximity with the toper's pot :—

Pass where we may, through city or through town,
Village or hamlet, of this merry land,—
Though lean and beggared, every twentieth pace
Conducts the unguarded nose to such a whiff
Of stale debauch, forth issuing from the sties
That law has licensed, as make temp'rance reel.
There sit, involved and lost in curling clouds
Of Indian fume and guzzling deep, the boor,
The lackey, and the groom. The craftsman there
Takes a Lethean leave of all his toil—
Smith, cobbler, joiner, he that plies the shears,
And he that kneads the dough—all loud alike,
All learned, and all drunk.

Like Cowper, Shelley never smoked, neither Wordsworth nor Keats, and old Thomas Fuller, although no smoker himself, did not condemn the practice, for, writing of it, he says*—"As for the praise of tobacco with the virtues thereof, they

* Gloucestershire, 349.

may better be performed by pens of such writers whose palates have tasted of the same."

Dr. Johnson was not a smoker, but it would seem that his sympathies were with the custom, of the sedative influence of which he had a high opinion. Alluding to the unpopularity of the fashion in his own time, he was heard one day to remark that insanity had in consequence grown more frequent. Indeed, that smoking should go out was a matter of surprise to him, and he said, "To be sure it is a shocking thing, blowing smoke out of our mouths into other people's mouths, eyes, and noses, and have the same thing done to us. Yet I cannot account why a thing which requires so little exertion, and yet preserves the mind from total vacuity, should have gone out. Every man has something by which he calms himself—beating with his feet or so."

Dr. Adam Clarke, who could never reconcile himself to the practice, deemed it expedient to find a useful purpose for the creation of tobacco by all-seeing wisdom, and argued that "in some rare cases of internal injury tobacco may be used, but not in the customary way."

The Duke of Wellington, again, was no smoker, nor Peel, and many more might be added to the list of those who have found no solace in the soothing weed.

CHAPTER VI.

SNUFF-TAKING.

Beau Brummell—Edward Wortley Montagu—Lord Petersham
— Lord Stanhope—Talleyrand—Dryden—Swift—Pope—
Addison—Lord Chesterfield—Dr. Johnson—Earl Buchan
—Sterne—Garrick—Duke of Bridgewater—Abernethy—
J. Horne Tooke—James Watt—Sir Joshua Reynolds—
Keats—Charles Lamb—Sir Francis Chantrey—Sir Walter
Scott—E. Gibbon—Steele—Soame Jenyns—Robert
Burns—Charles Dickens—Wm. Anderson—Captain
Marryat—Charles Lever—Archbishop Whately—Charles
Darwin.

FASHION is capricious, and snuff-taking, which in the last century was almost universally adopted by leaders of society in Europe, has long since fallen into abeyance. Indeed, in the days of Queen Anne the custom had become such a necessary institution that there were in the metropolis no less than seven thousand shops where this popular commodity could be obtained.

Boxes were made of the most costly materials and in all manner of shapes—

With all the show
Of art the greatest artist can bestow,
Charming in shape, with polished rays of light,
A joint so fine it shuns the sharpest sight,
Must still be graced with all the radiant gems
And precious stones that e'er arrived in Thames.
Within the lid the painter plays his part,
And with his pencil proves his matchless art,
There drawn to life some spark or mistress dwells,
Like hermits chaste and constant to their cells.

A great impetus, too, was given to the habit of snuff-taking in the year 1702. The fleet under the command of Sir George Rook captured at Port Saint Mary, near Cadiz, several thousand barrels of very choice Spanish snuff along with the plunder. On returning by Vigo they also obtained native snuff from the Havanna, destined for the Spanish market. This very large quantity of snuff was sold at the principal seaports as "prizes" for the benefit of officers and crews, and waggon loads were parted with at the rate of fourpence per pound. It was christened "Vigo Snuff," and, as Mr. Fairholt says, "the popularity of the war, the name of the snuff, and the novelty of excessive cheapness, combined to induce a very general use of it."

Many snuff-takers, following the example of Frederick the Great of Prussia, made it a hobby

to collect snuff-boxes, Beau Brummell having had a very curious and extensive assortment. On one occasion, when dining at Portman Square, on the removal of the cloth, the snuff-boxes made their appearance, and Brummell's was particularly admired. It was handed round for inspection, and a gentleman, finding it rather difficult to open, incautiously applied a dessert knife to the lid. Poor Brummell was on thorns. At last he could not contain himself any longer, and, addressing the host, said, with his characteristic quaintness—

“Will you be good enough to tell your friend that my snuff-box is not an oyster?”

Beau Brummell also prided himself on his graceful manner of opening the snuff-box with one hand only—the left. Judging from a satirical advertisement which appeared in the *Spectator*, it would seem that much attention was paid to this act, which afforded an opportunity of displaying the jewelled finger:—“The exercise of the snuff-box, according to the most fashionable airs and motions in opposition to the exercise of the fan, will be taught with the best plain or perfumed snuff, at Charles Lillie's, perfumer, at the corner of Beaufort Buildings, in the Strand, and attendance given for the benefit of the young merchants about the Exchange for two hours every day, at

noon, except Saturdays, at a toy-shop, near Garraway's Coffee House. There will be likewise taught the ceremony of the snuff-box, or rules for offering snuff to a stranger, a friend, or a mistress, according to the degrees of familiarity or distance, with an explanation of the careless, the scornful, the politic, and the surly pinch, and the gestures proper to each of them."*

Another great collector of snuff-boxes was Edward Wortley Montagu, the eccentric son of Lady Mary, who is said to have possessed more than "would suffice a Chinese idol with a hundred noses, a collection which perhaps was never equalled unless by that of George IV., who was not less extravagant and *recherché* in snuff and snuff-boxes than in other things."

Then there was Lord Petersham, who boasted a stock of snuffs worth three thousand pounds, while he had boxes adapted for all occasions—boxes for winter wear, boxes for summer use. Indeed, the story goes that he had a different box for every day in the year, and Captain Gronow saw him one day use a beautiful Sèvres box, which on being admired, he said, "was a nice summer box, but would not do for winter wear." He was a great connoisseur of snuffs, and "Lord Petersham's Mixture" has long been proverbial

* "Chronicles of Fashion," Mrs. Stone, 1845, ii., 416-17.

as a popular snuff. He actually devoted one room of his mansion in Whitehall Gardens to properly storing his snuff. That room, says Fairholt, was a curiosity in its way, with its rows of well-made jars, and proper materials of all kinds for the due admixture, and management, of the snuffs they contained, under the able superintendence of a well-informed man, who was the guardian angel thereof. After the earl's death the collection was sold, and prices that seem fabulous to the uninitiated were realized for the finer sorts.*

Lord Stanhope used to calculate that a regular snuff-taker took one pinch every ten minutes, each pinch, and its accompanying ceremonies, occupying a minute and a half. One minute and a half out of every ten, it has been pointed out, if sixteen hours be allowed to the day, gives two hours and twenty-four minutes per day, or thirty-six and a half days in the year as the time wasted by a snuff-taker upon his nose.

On the other hand, Talleyrand defended snuff-taking, not as a habit, but on principle. He maintained that all diplomatists ought to take snuff, as it afforded them an opportunity of delaying a reply which they might not have ready at hand. It further sanctioned, he said, the removal

* "Tobacco : its History and Associations," 282.

of one's eyes from those of the interrogator, and occupied the hands, which otherwise might betray a nervous fidget calculated to expose, rather than conceal, his feelings.

Dryden was a snuff-taker, and was in the habit of frequenting Wills' Coffee House, in Bow Street, Covent Garden, which consequently became one of the leading resorts of the wits of his time. Thus Ned Ward relates in his "London Spy" how "a parcel of raw, second-rate beaux and wits were conceited if they had but the honour to dip a finger into Mr. Dryden's snuff-box."

Swift liked his snuff, and made his own mixture by working in pounded tobacco with ready-manufactured Spanish snuff; while Pope also patronized the habit, speaking, in his "Rape of the Lock," of the use of the snuff-box as a fashionable appendage:—

Sir Plume of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane;
With earnest eyes, and round unthinking face,
He first the snuff-box open'd, then the case.

Then there was Addison and Lord Chesterfield, who, in his last letter to his son, tells him that he has "sent in four successive letters so much of the Duchess of Somerset's snuff as a letter could well convey."

Dr. Johnson indulged in snuff, and was in the

habit of taking it out of his waistcoat pocket, instead of a box; and James Boswell wrote in praise of the fashion some lines, from which we quote the following:—

Oh, snuff! our fashionable end and aim—
 Strasburgh, Rappee, Dutch, Scotch—whate'er thy name!
 Powder celestial! quintessence divine!
 New joys entrance my soul while thou art mine;
 Who takes? who takes thee not? Where'er I range
 I smell thy sweets from Pall Mall to the 'Change.

The eleventh Earl of Buchan—brother of Thomas Erskine, who by the force of his eloquence rose to be Lord Chancellor of England—was remarkable for his penuriousness, and eccentricity. In the year 1782 the Goldsmiths of Edinburgh presented him with a mounted snuff-box, made from the tree to which William Wallace had once been indebted for his safety. Ten years afterwards, however, Lord Buchan obtained permission from the Goldsmiths to give the snuff-box to Washington, at that time President of the United States. As a reason for so doing he maintained that Washington was the only man in the world to whom he thought the snuff-box justly due.

When Mrs. Sterne was about to join her husband in Paris, in the year 1762, he wrote:—
 “You will find good tea upon the road from York to Dover. Only bring a little to carry you from Calais to Paris. Give the Custom-house Officer

what I told you. At Calais give more, if you have much Scotch snuff; but, as tobacco is good here, you had best bring a Scotch mull, and make it yourself—that is, order your valet to manufacture it, 'twill keep him out of mischief;" and in another letter he adds, "You must be cautious about Scotch snuff; take half-a-pound in your pocket, and make Lyd do the same."

Southey, again, it may be remembered, eulogizes snuff in high terms in the following well-known lines:—

Most rare Columbus! thou shalt be for this
The only Christopher in my kalender.
Why, but for thee the uses of the nose
Were half unknown, and its capacity of joy.

When manager of Drury Lane Theatre, Garrick brought into fashion a particular snuff mixture. It appears that a man named Hardham had been his *numberer*—to count the audience in the theatre—and on inventing his "mixture," Garrick rendered him the following service. Whilst enacting the character of a man of fashion on the stage, Garrick offered a pinch of his snuff to a fellow comedian, observing that it was the most fashionable mixture of the day, and to be had *only* at Hardham's, 37, Fleet Street. As may be imagined, the puff answered beyond Garrick's expectation, and for many years afterwards

Hardham's was the favourite mixture, when snuff-taking was the rage and fashion of the time. It may be added that Hardham, having made a large fortune by his snuff trade in Fleet Street, retired to Chichester, where he died in the year 1772, bequeathing a portion of his well-earned wealth to charitable institutions of that city, which, by-the-bye, was his native place.

Out of doors, the Duke of Bridgewater took snuff, and he would pull huge pinches out of his right waistcoat pocket and thrust the powder up his nose, accompanying the operation, writes Mr. Smiles,* "with sundry strong short snorts."

A story is told of Abernethy, who, upon being asked by an inveterate consumer of *râpé* if an immoderate use of snuff was calculated to injure the brain, replied, in his usual caustic and splenetic manner—"Not in the least, sir, for people who take snuff immoderately *can have no brains.*"

John Horne Tooke was much addicted to snuff-taking, in which he indulged greatly, generally carrying a large box in his pocket. His rappee, says his biographer,† "was freely communicated to all around who chose to follow his example, and this was usually the signal for his telling a

* "Lives of the Engineers," i., 412.

† "Life of John Horne Tooke," A. Stephens, ii., 500.

facetious story. He seldom, indeed, concluded a droll adventure, and 'set the table in a roar,' which he did with the gravest face imaginable, without taking a pinch of his Strasburgh."

The homely solace of an occasional pinch of snuff was a little indulgence which James Watt dearly loved. But this predilection was rarely gratified, for the assiduous legislation of Mrs. Watt denounced the snuff-box. Her habit was to lay violent hands on the offending "mull" whenever she could surprise it, and to carry it away to the safe custody of her china closet. The philosopher submitted with his usual good temper, but in his own good time was sure to watch his wife when employed amidst her favourite ware, and, while her back was turned, to steal a pinch, or even to recapture the box, and bear off his prize in triumph. "Short-lived," however, "were such successes against the enemy," for, as Mr. Muirhead writes, "the name of James Watt adds another to the long roll of those sages who from Socrates downwards, reversing the doctrine of our great poet and his 'Tamed Shrew,' have been compelled to pay to their wives the tribute of

"Love, fair looks, and true obedience."*

Sir Joshua Reynolds took snuff so freely when he was painting that it occasionally inconvenienced

* "Taming of the Shrew," Act V., Scene 2.

his sitters. The story goes that when he was painting the large picture at Blenheim of the Marlborough family, the Duchess one day ordered the servant to bring a broom and sweep up Sir Joshua's snuff from the carpet; but Reynolds, who would not permit any interruption while engaged in his studio, ordered him to let the snuff remain until the completion of his picture, observing that the dust, raised by the broom, would do more injury to his picture than the snuff could possibly do to the carpet.

According to another story, a gentleman told Wilkie he sat to Sir Joshua, "who dabbled in a quantity of snuff, laid the picture on its back, shook it about till it settled like a batter-pudding, and then painted away. This was, it is said, to get a surface like Rembrandt's, and, in accordance with Gandy's advice to Reynolds, for a rich texture and creamy colour."

Keats and Charles Lamb were snuff-takers, and Sir Francis Chantrey was a second Sir Joshua in his love for snuff. The large silver box which he constantly used, and which had been a present to him from his friend, Mr. Hatchett, the chemist, was, after the death of her husband, given by Lady Chantrey to John Read, as a memento of long-cherished friendship.*

A pleasant picture of Sir Walter Scott's

* Holland's "Memoirs of Chantrey."

domestic life is given in Washington Irving's "Abbotsford and Newstead." When the American visited the novelist he walked with him to a quarry, where his people were at work. "The face of the humblest dependent," writes Irving, "brightened at his approach. All paused from their labour to have a pleasant 'crack wi' the laird.'" Among the rest was a tall, straight old fellow, with a healthful complexion and silver hairs, and a small round-crowned white hat. He stood looking at Scott with a slight sparkling of his blue eye as if waiting his turn, for the old fellow knew he was a favourite. Scott accosted him in an affable tone, and asked for a pinch of snuff. The old man drew forth a horn snuff-box.

"'Hoot man,' said Scott, 'not that old mull. Where's the bonnie French one that I brought you from Paris?'

"'Troth, your honour,' replied the old fellow, 'I've a mull as thae is nae for week-days.'

"On leaving the quarry Scott said that when absent at Paris he had purchased several trifling articles as presents for his dependents, and among others the gay snuff-box in question, which was so carefully reserved for Sundays by the veteran. 'It was not so much the value of the gifts,' he added, 'that pleased them as the idea that the laird should think of them when so far away.'"

A confirmed snuff-taker was Gibbon, who, in one of his letters, has left this account of his mode of using it:—"I drew my snuff-box, rapped it, took snuff twice, and continued my discourse in my usual attitude of my body bent forwards, and my fore-finger stretched out."

According to Steele, "when a person feels his thoughts run out, it is natural enough to supply his weak place with powder," and he tells us how he laboured for three years to talk a lady out of the habit, till an accident accomplished what all his persevering eloquence had failed to do. On one occasion she happened to have a handsome "young friend concealed in a closet," who ran hither to avoid some company who came to visit her. She made excuse to go to him for some implement they were talking of. Her eager gallant snatched a kiss, but, being unused to snuff, some grains from her upper lip made him sneeze, which alarmed the visitors, and made a discovery that in no slight measure discomposed her presence of mind.

But Steele, it may be remembered, inveighed loudly against lady snuff-takers, and has described Mrs. Saunter taking snuff as often as salt with her meals, with such wonderful negligence that an upper lip covered with snuff and sauce was presented to all who had the

honour of dining with her ; while her pretty niece made up for not offending the eye to the same degree by startling the ear with a nauseous rattle as she stopped her nostrils with her fingers. At the same time, Steele did not object to see a pretty hand manipulate a snuff-box, but thought Flavilia went a little too far in pulling out her snuff-box in the middle of the sermon, and offering it to the men and women near her, as well as to the churchwarden, as she dropped her contribution into the plate.

Soame Jenyns, the clever writer of the last century, who, it is said, "was the charm of the circle and gave a zest to every company he came into," was a snuff-taker, in allusion to which habit Mr. Chalmers writes amusingly :—"It was rather to be lamented that his lady, Mrs. Jenyns, had so great a respect for his good sayings and so imperfect a recollection of them, for though she always prefaced her recitals of them with 'as Mr. Jenyns says,' it was not always what Mr. Jenyns said, and never, I am apt to think, as Mr. Jenyns said ; but she was an excellent old lady, and twirled her fan with as much mechanical address as her genius husband twirled his snuff-box."

Many a snug winter evening did Robert Burns spend with his associate Bacon, who kept a well-

known posting-house north of Dumfries. On these occasions the bard and innkeeper smoked, and drank their whisky toddy as they chatted together; while the former composed some of his best convivial songs during these meetings. In memory of the happy hours thus spent, Burns gave Bacon his snuff-box, which had been his pocket companion for many years, this fact only being known to a few. But after Bacon's death in the year 1825 his various effects were sold, and with them the snuff-box. At first sight this relic of bygone days, made of the tip of a horn, with its plain silver-mounted lid, seemed of little value, and was about to be knocked down by the auctioneer for a trivial sum, when someone discovered the following inscription upon it:—
 “Robert Burns, Officer of the Excise.” At once up went the bidding among the eager purchasers, and eventually this relic of the Scotch bard was knocked down for five pounds.

When a boy Charles Dickens attended a school kept in Clover Lane, Chatham, by a young Baptist minister, named William Giles. According to Mr. Forster—“When half-way through the publication of ‘Pickwick,’ his old teacher sent a silver snuff-box, with an admiring inscription to the ‘inimitable Boz.’ It reminded him of praise far more precious obtained by him at his first year’s

examination in the Clover Lane Academy, when his recitation of a piece out of the 'Humourists' Miscellany' had received, unless his youthful vanity bewildered him, a double encore. A habit—the only bad one taught him by Mr. Giles—of taking for a time in very moderate quantities the snuff called Irish Blackguard, was the result of this gift from his old master, but he abandoned it after some few years, and it was never resumed."

William Anderson, who, for a long period, was perhaps the most interesting preacher in Glasgow, was one of those broad-minded men and fearless champions of every worthy cause that have made their good sense and influence felt in the world. "A true and spontaneous humourist," we are told, "he was grand and wise enough not to allow the pulpit to restrain his sense of the grotesque and his relish of a joke, though levity and buffoonery were ever far from him." He was known as an enthusiastic snuffer, and on one occasion in the pulpit, when uttering the words "My soul cleaveth to the dust," he took a huge pinch of snuff.

At another time, when vigorously proclaiming in the words of Scripture that "All is vanity," he profusely treated his nose to the precious and familiar luxury, and then cried, "And this also is vanity." "Long years ago," writes

one who often heard him preach, "we were perhaps as much impressed by the frequency and ardour of his applications to his snuff-box as by his earnestness."* His biographer says that Anderson condemned the taking of snuff, but perhaps all he did was to lament the mastery which snuff had gained over him; otherwise he would have been guilty of hypocrisy for blaming in others what he himself practised.

Captain Marryat, again, who was not a great smoker, only now and then indulging himself with a cigar, took an immense quantity of snuff, much to the dissatisfaction of his little greyhound Juno, into whose eyes it was sure to fall whenever she tried to bury her nose in the folds of his waistcoat.†

Charles Lever was at one time a snuff-taker, but he appears to have broken himself early of the habit, and for the last twenty years of his life he never carried a box.‡

In lecturing, Dr. Whately sometimes found it convenient to take a pinch of snuff while a student was trying to unravel in his mind some pithy question he had put to him. The following picture has been drawn of his teaching days:—

* "Cope's Tobacco Plant," 522.

† "Life and Letters of Captain Marryat," ii., 137.

‡ "Life of Charles Lever," W. J. Fitzpatrick, i., 122.

"The logic class is assembled. The door by which the principal is to enter is exactly opposite to the foot of the stair, which descends from his own apartment. It stands open, and presently a kind of rushing sound is heard on the staircase. The next instant Whately plunges into the room, saying, while yet in the doorway—

"'Explain the nature of the third operation of the mind, Mr. Johnson.'

"But as none of the operations of Mr. Johnson's mind are so rapid as those of the energetic principal, the latter has had time to fling himself into a chair, cross the small of one leg over the knee of the other, balance himself on the two hind legs of the chair, and begin to show signs of impatience before Mr. Johnson has sufficiently gathered his wits together. While that process is being accomplished, the principal soothes his impatience by the administration of a huge pinch, or handful rather, of snuff to his nose, copiously sprinkling his waistcoat with the superfluity thereof. Then at last comes a meagre answer from Mr. Johnson in the words of the text book, which is followed by the lecturer giving a luminous exposition of the rationale of the whole of that part of the subject."

With Charles Darwin snuff was a stimulant, and was taken during work hours. He took snuff for

many years of his life, having learnt the habit at Edinburgh as a student. "He had a nice silver snuff-box," writes his son,* "given him by Mrs. Wedgwood, of Maer, which he valued much—but he rarely carried it, because it tempted him to take too many pinches." In one of his early letters he speaks of having given up snuff for a month, and describes himself as feeling "most lethargic, stupid, and melancholy."

He generally took snuff from a jar on the hall-table, "because having to go this distance was a slight check; the clink of the lid of the snuff-jar was a very familiar sound. Sometimes when he was in the drawing-room, it would occur to him that the study fire must be burning low," and when someone offered to see after it, "it would turn out that he also wished to get a pinch of snuff." But snuff-takers of this good old type are rarely to be met with nowadays.

* "Life and Letters of Charles Darwin," i., 121, 122.

CHAPTER VII.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS.

John Wilkes—Oliver Goldsmith—Samuel Johnson—Lord Ashburton—Lord Loughborough—Lord Ellenborough—Lord Brougham—Porson—Thackeray—Sir Walter Scott—Admiral Lord Keppel—Lord Elgin—Duke of Wellington—Pope—Garrick—Edmund Kean—Duke of Norfolk—Lord Nelson—Lord John Russell—Sir Charles James Napier—Lord Chief Justice Cockburn—Crofton Croker—Tom Moore—Thomas Gray—Flaxman—Douglas Jerrold—Lord North—John Metcalf—Lieut. Holman—Thomas Blacklock—Professor Sanderson—Isaac D'Israeli—Alexander Davidson—Thomas Wilson—Henry Fawcett—Edmund Malone—Lord Hatherley—Sir Robert Peel—Lord Chesterfield—Henry Kirke White—Bishop Thirlwall—Walter Savage Landor—Admiral Boscawen—Lord Byron.

MANY men—although personally they have had little to recommend them—have by the force of their individuality only too often actually outwitted, as favourites of society, those upon whose outward form nature has smiled more kindly. Thus John Wilkes, in spite of his bad nose and

prominent cast in his eye, put into the shade the fashionable dandies of his time, and was much sought after by even the fair leaders of society. Indeed, as the oft-told tale runs, Wilkes used to assert that if any man—even the most handsome—would give him a quarter of an hour's start, he would, in the race for a woman's affection, obtain an easy victory. But he was no exception, for brain power, in whatever way displayed, must, sooner or later, excite admiration, and cause the man's real self to lighten up with a refined, and intellectual, beauty his otherwise ill-favoured form. No one, in reading Oliver Goldsmith's clever writings, thinks of his ugly scarred face; and who cares nowadays what Dr. Johnson was like? The man lives as an intellectual power, in spite of his corpulent person, his St. Vitus's dance, and his unwieldy gait. Some men, again, have had their personal appearance marred by sundry other defects, such as an ugly or disproportioned nose, many amusing instances of which have often been noticed. But luckily this defect has not spoilt their worldly prospects, as Pascal says might have been the case with Cleopatra, who remarks that had her nose been shorter, the whole face of the world would have been changed. Is it possible that Antony could have fallen in love with a snub-faced woman?

John Dunning, Lord Ashburton, was not gifted with personal beauty, and "Never," writes Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, "did nature enclose a more illuminated mind in a body of meaner and more abject appearance. It is difficult to do justice to the peculiar species of ugliness which characterized his person and figure, though he did not labour under any absolute deformity of shape or limb." The same authority further tells us that he was fond of viewing his face in the glass, and passed no time more to his satisfaction than in decorating himself for his appearance in the world.

At one period of his life Lord Loughborough was much subject to obloquy. Not only was there said to be "famine in his face," but he was, among other things, reproached for ugliness, and to give point to this charge he also was said to take great delight in admiring himself in the looking-glass. Mrs. Piozzi tells us that, having mentioned in the presence of Dr. Johnson this ridiculous propensity, which likewise distinguished Mr. Caton (a great timber merchant, also very ill-favoured), he defended them, and thus moralized on the subject in a manner truly characteristic of himself:—"They see reflected in that glass men who have risen from almost the lowest situations in life—one to enormous riches, the other to everything this world can give—rank, fame, and

fortune. They see likewise men who have merited their advancement by the exertion and improvement of those talents which God has given them, and I see not why they should avoid the mirror."

Lord Ellenborough had a strange aversion to Lord Brougham, and, alluding on one occasion to the peculiarity of his nose, remarked:—"Mr. Brougham's nose was always quivering and shaking, and, as if conscious it deserved being pulled, seemed anxious to get out of the way." From all accounts, his nose seems to have been very curiously shaped, and, in a little work entitled "*Notes on Noses*,"* the writer, after speaking of the various orders into which noses may be arranged, and the significance of these as to the character of their possessors, wittily remarks:—"It now only remains to treat of some obstinate noses which will not come within our classification. One of these is that curious formation, a compound of Roman, Greek, cogitative, and celestial, with the addition of a button at the end, prefixed to the front of my Lord Brougham. It is a most eccentric nose. Turn it, and twist it, and view it how, when, or where you will, it is never to be seen twice in the same shape, and all you can say of it is that it's a queer one."

* See "*The Maclise Portrait Gallery*," W. Bates, 105.

Indeed, it is generally agreed that Brougham's nose was decidedly peculiar, and it is not surprising that this peculiarity should have afforded opportunity for ridicule. His whole appearance also was uncommon, as may be gathered from the following description, which was given in the "Leisure Hour" for August 1st, 1868 :—"The features of Lord Brougham were harsh in the extreme, while his forehead shot up to a great elevation ; his chin was very long and square ; his mouth, nose, and eyes seem huddled together in the centre of his face ; his eyes absolutely lost amidst folds and corrugations ; and while he sat listening, they seemed to retire inward, or to be veiled by a flimsy curtain, which not only concealed the appalling glare which shot always from them when he was aroused, but rendered his mind and his purpose a sealed book to the keenest scrutiny of man."

Porson's nose was an unpleasant trouble to him ; its redness, it is said, having proceeded from his indulgence in port wine. In one instance he was very droll, at his own expense, in reply to the invitation of his friend, Mr. Joy, a surgeon, and wrote :—"For some time past my face, or rather *my nose*, whether from good living or bad humours, has been growing into a great resemblance of honest Bardolph's, or, to keep still on

the list of honest fellows, of honest Richard Brinsley's. I have therefore put myself under a regimen of abstinence till my poor nose recovers its *quondam* colour and compass, after which I shall be happy to attend your parties on the shortest notice."

On another occasion he went to call on one of the judges, whom he knew very well, when a gentleman—who was a stranger to Porson—was waiting impatiently for the barber. Negligently attired, and with a patch of brown paper soaked in vinegar on his inflamed nose, he was shown into the room where the gentleman was sitting, who suddenly started up and, approaching him, said —

"Are you the barber?"

"No, sir," replied Porson, "but I am a cunning shaver, very much at your service."

In telling stories of this kind Porson displayed his keen wisdom, for, by so doing, he took the opportunity out of the hands of another, who might not give so agreeable a picture of his peculiarity.

By an unfortunate accident Thackeray's nose was injured when a boy, and those who knew him personally can well remember the indelible scar. "What a misfortune it is," wrote the well-known authoress, Frances Anne Kemble, in her "Records

of a Girlhood" (1879, iii., 162), "to have a broken nose, like poor, dear Thackeray! He would have been positively handsome—and is positively ugly in consequence of it. John (Kemble) and his friend, Venables, broke the bridge of Thackeray's nose when they were schoolboys playing together. What a mishap to befall a young lad just beginning life!"

Sir Walter Scott had a defective sense of smell, and Lockhart writes that he has "seen him stare about, quite unconscious of the cause, when his whole company betrayed their uneasiness at the approach of an over-kept haunch of venison; and neither by the nose, or the palate, could he distinguish corked wine from sound. He could never tell Madeira from sherry. And an Oriental friend having sent him a butt of Shiraz, when he remembered the circumstance some time afterwards, and called for a bottle to have St. John Malcolm's opinion of its quality, it turned out that his butler, mistaking the label, had already served up half the bin as sherry."

In his early manhood, Admiral Lord Keppel received a blow from the butt-end of a pistol in a scuffle with foot-pads, which fractured the bridge of his nose. In consequence of this accident his face was seriously and permanently disfigured, yet, we are told, "the fascination of his smile

and the lively and benevolent expression of his eyes redeemed the countenance from extreme plainness."

Lord Elgin, on whose face the nasal organ was conspicuous by its absence, will go down to posterity in the well-known epigram —

Noseless himself, he brought home noseless blocks.

The conspicuous dimensions of the Duke of Wellington's nose made him many a time the subject of harmless caricature, while equally familiar in past years has been the "eagle-beak" of Sir Charles James Napier, the intrepid soldier, "some of whose military exploits," it has been remarked, "would appear incredible were they not nineteenth-century facts."

Many eminent men have been as intellectually great as they have been physically small. Indeed, from the earliest times, illustrations crowd round us; and, however much some have argued the disadvantages arising from what has been termed defect of stature, it would seem that genius has only too frequently selected for her favourites men who have been small both in height and bulk. But Montaigne was of a different opinion, for he writes: "I am somewhat under the middle-height, a defect which has in it not only somewhat of deformity, but still more of inconvenience, especially to those placed in command or in

office, for the authority which a fine presence and a majestic person give is in such a case wanting." But, whatever Montaigne may have thought, experience proves that, even in spite of an ephemeral ridicule, little men have made an immortal reputation.

Pope, it may be remembered, was not by any means favoured by fortune, and his appearance has been thus described: "His person was slender and distorted, and his stature so low that, in order to bring him to a level with the tables of the common height, it was necessary to elevate his seat. He was unable (at least, after the middle of life) to dress, or undress himself, or to go to bed, or to rise without assistance. He used to wear a sort of fur doublet under a shirt of very coarse linen, with fine sleeves, also stays made of stiff canvas, laced closely round him. And over these a flannel waistcoat. Three pairs of stockings were required to give his legs a respectable appearance." In one of the lampoons which his satire provoked, he is spoken of "as a little creature scarce four feet high, whose very sight makes one laugh, strutting, and swelling, like the frog in Horace, and demanding the admiration of all mankind because it can make fine verses."*

Garrick, whose death Johnson said "eclipsed

* See *Gentleman's Magazine*, June, 1888.

the harmless gaiety of nations," was another little man, and was often somewhat unsparingly caricatured. On one occasion a lady asked Foote —

"Pray, sir, are your puppets to be as large as life?"

"Oh, dear, no, madam, not much above the size of Garrick."

Then there was his successor in the following century, Edmund Kean, of whom Mrs. Siddons said he did well, but there was too little of him even to make an actor. But she was wrong, for the "little gipsy man," as some of his detractors styled him, was destined in future years to hold audiences breathless, night after night, by his talent as an actor. Indeed, wanting in height, as he might be, yet, as soon as his voice was heard, his personality quickly caused attention to be rivetted on his marvellous histrionic powers; and those around him, although tall and gifted with fine physique, failed to win anything like the admiration accorded to him.

When Welbore Ellis succeeded Lord George Germaine in the year 1782 as War Minister, brilliant was the play of Burke's sarcasm upon the new appointment. The diminutive figure of the new Minister on the Ministerial benches was made all the more noticeable by his manifest depression.

"I have come into office," said he, "to employ

the remaining vigour left me by age and infirmity for the benefit of the State. I have now made my confession of faith, and trust it may prove satisfactory to the House."

Burke immediately rose, and, in language which was full of bad taste, accused the new Minister of being Lord George Germaine in effigy. He compared the diminutive Minister to a caterpillar that, having long reposed in the chrysalis state within the silken folds of the Treasurership of the Navy, had at length burst its ligaments, expanded its wings, and fluttered forth the Secretary of the hour, and though the appearance of the creature, he added, might be changed, it was, however, a caterpillar still.

The epithet "little," given by the sailor to Admiral Lord Keppel, denotes him to have been of low stature, and Henry Grattan was short and of meagre appearance. His walk, it is said, was singularly ungraceful; he never put his heels to the ground, and when at college, on account of his gait, had the nickname given him of "The Elastic Body."

Equally curious the appearance of Charles Howard, Duke of Norfolk, seems to have been. When young he was described as of particularly square habit of body, but, in the decline of life, his figure, "as seen behind, might

be likened to a square elongated, to a short proportioned oblong."

Nelson, again, was a short, slightly-built man; and the caricature history of past years, as contained in the cartoons of *Punch*, did not fail to recognize the small proportions of that famous statesman, Lord John Russell.

Crofton Croker was described by Sir Walter Scott, who breakfasted with him at Lockhart's, as "little as a dwarf, keen-eyed as a hawk, and of easy, prepossessing manners—something like Tom Moore." Thomas Gray, the poet, and Flaxman, the sculptor, were short, as also was Douglas Jerrold.

Among further instances of great men of little stature may be noticed the Duke of Wellington, Sir Charles James Napier, and Lord Chief Justice Cockburn.

The privation of sight has been by no means an uncommon defect with those who have made themselves famous in various ways. Lord North, the celebrated statesman, towards the close of his life suffered from loss of vision. "In the year 1787," writes his youngest daughter, "Lord North's sight began rapidly to fail him, and in a few months he became totally blind in consequence of a palsy on the optic nerve." This affliction, however, did not interfere with his

good spirits, and when Horace Walpole dined with him at Bushy Park, in the course of the autumn, he writes: "Never had he seen a more interesting sight. Lord North's spirits, good-humour, wit, sense, drollery, are as perfect as ever; the unremitting attention of Lady North and his children most touching. Mr. North leads him about, Miss North sits constantly by him, carves meat, watches his every motion, scarce puts a bit into her own lips, and if one cannot help commending her, she colours with modesty and sorrow till the tears gush into her eyes. If ever loss of sight could be compensated, it is by so affectionate a family."

But in spite of this terrible drawback, instances are plentiful of men who have pursued their avocations, and had recourse to the most ingenious contrivances for continuing their intellectual labours. Then, although John Metcalf, at the early age of six, lost his eyesight through small-pox, he overcame difficulties apparently insurmountable—superintending the building of bridges and the construction of high roads, occupations for which his defect would seem to have wholly disqualified him. It has been commonly said that the loss of one sense quickens the others, and this seems to have been the case with Metcalf, of whom the most curious anecdotes are told. Thus, on one

occasion, passing through Halifax, he stopped at an inn called the Broad Stone. The landlord's son, and some others who frequented Harrogate, having heard of Metcalf's exploits, expressed a wish to play at cards with him, to which he consented. A pack was sent for, which he examined. The game was commenced, and Metcalf quickly beat four of them in turn, and afterwards won fifteen shillings at shilling whist.

On another occasion two persons had a dispute concerning some sheep, which one of them had put into a penfold. The owner of the sheep, a townsman of Metcalf, appeared to be unfairly treated by the other party, who wished to take an undue advantage. Accordingly Metcalf determined to do a good turn to his friend before going home. Climbing over the wall of the penfold about midnight, he laid hold of the sheep, one after the other, and threw them over the wall. As the number diminished they were not so easily caught; but, not deterred by this difficulty, he completed the business. On the following day, a considerable degree of surprise was occasioned when the penfold was found untenanted, though the door was fast locked. Metcalf, of course, passed unsuspected, and enjoyed the joke in silence.

Equally astonishing were the exploits of

Lieutenant Holman, R.N., the great traveller, who had the misfortune to lose his sight at the very early age of twenty-five. But, when the "sentence of total blindness was pronounced upon him, he made up his mind to endure it cheerfully," and, gratifying his taste for adventure, began to travel, journeying first through France and eventually setting out by himself through Europe, Asia, America, and Australia. "The moral courage, the energy, the self-reliance, and the irrepressible spirit of enterprise in this blind man," adds Mr. Smiles, "render him altogether one of the most remarkable characters in the whole range of biography."*

Although blind from his infancy, Thomas Blacklock was a very remarkable man, for he not only made himself master of various foreign languages, but obtained eminence as a poet. He acquired a knowledge of the various branches of philosophy and theology, and contributed the article "Blind" to the "Encyclopædia Britannica," published in 1783. Among the many anecdotes related of him, we are told how in music his skill as a judge and composer was considerable, and, without hardly ever having seen the light, it is surprising that he should be so remarkably happy in his descriptions, as, for instance, in the following passage :—

* "Life and Labour," 436.

Let long-lived pansies here their scents bestow,
The violets languish and the roses glow ;
In yellow glory let the crocus shine,
Narcissus here his love-sick head recline,
Here hyacinths in purple sweetness rise,
And tulips tinged with beauty's fairest dyes.

Another man who rose to eminence was Dr. Sanderson, becoming Professor of Mathematics and Optics to the University of Cambridge. His sense of touch was so exquisite that in a collection of Roman medals he distinguished the genuine from the false, though they had been counterfeited with such exactness as to deceive even a connoisseur. His ear was equally exact, for he could judge of the size of a room, and of his distance from the wall. His method of calculation was noteworthy, an ingenious contrivance to which M. Diderot refers in the following letter :—"This Sanderson, madam, is an author deprived of sight, with whom it may not be foreign to our purpose to amuse you. They relate prodigies of him, and of these prodigies there is not one which his progress in the *Belles Lettres*, and his mathematical attainments, do not render credible. The same instrument served him for algebraical calculations, and for the construction of rectilineal figures."

About the year 1839 Isaac D'Israeli was stricken with blindness. But, as in the case of Milton, the American Prescott, and the French

historian Thierry, this sad calamity did not altogether interrupt his valuable labours. By the aid of his daughter—who, to use his own touching words, “so often lent the light of her eyes, the intelligence of her voice, and the careful work of her hand”—the stricken author, although surrounded by “unfinished labours and frustrated designs,” was enabled, amongst other literary productions, to revise his well-known and popular “*Miscellanies of Literature*” for Moxon’s collective edition of 1840, and also his great work of the “*Life and Reign of Charles the First*,” which, on its first appearance, had procured for him the honorary degree of D.C.L. from the University of Oxford.

Among further cases of great blind men may be mentioned Alexander Davidson, the blind philosopher of Dalkeith, and Thomas Wilson, the blind bell-ringer of Dumfries. Sir Joshua Reynolds became blind comparatively late in life, and the sad accident that befell the late Henry Fawcett is known to most readers. That he did not allow this misfortune to affect the usefulness of his career in life is evidenced by his busy Parliamentary life, and the enjoyment he still took in those recreations from which many would have thought him debarred.

Some early defect in vision, increased by

constant occupation in books and manuscripts, somewhat interfered with Edmund Malone's pleasures of life. "Whenever after the play he walked round to Mr. Kemble's dressing-room, his usual complaint was, 'I dare say it was a very perfect performance, but you have made your houses so large that I really can neither hear nor see in them.' " The fact was that his eyesight failed him.

Lord Hatherley suffered from defective eyesight. The famous Bennett judgment, which was delivered on June 8th, 1872, was read by the Archbishop of York, at his request, because, as he said, his own infirmity of sight rendered prolonged reading painful to him. For some time he had been contending with great inconvenience arising from his failing eyesight. "Indeed, all through his life," writes his biographer,* "he had been dependent on one eye only; the other was what oculists term a 'conical eye,' which, owing to undue convexity, was so near-sighted as to be practically useless."

Moreover, unknown to him, a cataract had been for many years forming upon his good eye. Nevertheless, he fought on with indomitable perseverance, and cheerfulness, against his daily increasing infirmity, until his inability to read the

* "Memoir of Lord Hatherley," W. R. W. Stephens, ii., 241.

Queen's Message and other official documents in the House convinced him that in the interests of public business he ought not to protract the struggle. Accordingly, about Michaelmas, 1872, he resigned office, which was conferred upon Sir Roundell Palmer (Lord Selborne). His eye was afterwards successfully operated upon by Mr. Bowman, and, in his days of enforced inactivity, he made some progress in learning the raised type made for the use of the blind, and took much interest in visiting institutions for the blind, and in aiding them by his benefactions.

Many of our great men have been afflicted with deafness, which has proved a serious impediment to their enjoyment of conversation. As is well known Sir Robert Peel was deaf for twenty years on the left side, attended with noises in the head so excessive that he was frequently awakened by them, and his rest destroyed for the remainder of the night. This he attributed to excess in shooting with percussion caps.

On growing deaf Lord Chesterfield quitted the fashionable world, and spent the remainder of his life at Blackheath, in the vicinity of the avenue known as Chesterfield's Walk. Writing to a friend in France, when he was about sixty, he says :—"I have vegetated all this year without pleasure, and without pain. My age and my deafness forbid the former, and my philosophy,

or perhaps my temperament, guarantees me against the latter. I derive the best part of my amusement from the tranquil pleasures of gardening, as well as from walking and reading, meanwhile waiting for death, which I neither desire nor fear."

Henry Kirke White suffered from difficulty of hearing, which was one of the reasons that induced him to relinquish the law; and, it may be remembered, an accident caused the Duke of Wellington serious inconvenience. When inspecting an experimental carriage for a howitzer, and whilst in advance of the gun, he gave the word "Fire," the result being the rupture of the membrane of the left ear. The accident caused the Duke much suffering, and eventually he consulted Mr. W. Wright, who, in his "Treatise on Deafness," says:—"I had several very long conferences with him in the early portion of my attendance, during which I explained to him the anatomy, and functions, of the auditory apparatus, and all the sense of hearing which he enjoyed during the last thirty years of his life was the result of my treatment. As an instance of his dependence on me," he adds, "whilst at Strathfieldsaye, he had been applying a preparation to his ear improperly, and rendered himself totally deaf. In that state he attended her Majesty to the House of Lords to

open Parliament, on the 3rd February, 1852. Immediately the ceremony was over, he sent his under house steward in a carriage to request my attendance. I exerted myself to the utmost, as he wanted to speak in the House on the case of Sir Harry Smith, and on the 5th I enabled him to do so, and he commenced by telling their lordships 'he could not have done so a few days ago.'"

Sir Joshua Reynolds suffered from deafness, in connection with which Sir Martin Shee used to relate a singular fact. While at breakfast with him in Leicester Square, 1790, and during a long protracted interval which followed, the conversation was carried on in the ordinary tone, without any assistance from the acoustic tube or any indication of imperfect hearing on the part of Sir Joshua. During the morning, however, they were not unfrequently interrupted by the entrance of a servant with a message, or some communication, that required his master's attention and oral reply. On such occasions the appearance of a third person was the signal for Sir Joshua to snatch up his trumpet and resume a look of anxious inquiry, and uncertain comprehension. But it has been remarked that "it is no uncommon thing for a deaf person to hear better in a *tête-à-tête* colloquy than when surrounded by a buzz of

general conversation in a large party.”* Anyhow, in Sir Joshua’s case the contrast seems to have been unusually marked, and calculated to impart a peculiar significance to Goldsmith’s couplet —

When they talked of their Raphaels, Corregios, and stuff,
He shifted his trumpet and only took snuff.

Bishop Thirlwall’s deafness, which varied at times, often interfered with his enjoyment of conversation, and there is a story related of his too evident candour, when, on hearing a remark about the weather, which had several times to be repeated by a friend before he could catch its meaning, he said, musingly thinking aloud, “Strange how little one loses by being deaf.”†

Then there was Walter Savage Landor, concerning whose deafness Trollope, in his “What I Remember,”‡ relates an amusing anecdote:—“I remember him asking after my mother. I told him that she was fairly well, was not suffering, but that she was becoming very deaf.

“‘Dead, is she?’ he cried, for he had heard me imperfectly. ‘I wish I was. I can’t sleep,’ he added, ‘but I very soon shall, soundly too, and all the twenty-four hours round.’”

Admiral Boscawen was remarkable for an extraordinary inclination of the head towards one

* Shee’s “Life of Sir Martin Shee.”

† “Bishop Thirlwall’s Letters,” 1861, xiv.

‡ ii., 246.

shoulder—a habit which he is said to have contracted when a youth by mimicking an old servant of the family, and which he never afterwards could get rid of.

From childhood, as is well known, Lord Byron was extremely sensitive of his lameness. Indeed, the story goes that even as a child he resented allusion being made to his infirmity. “I have been told by a gentleman of Glasgow,” writes Moore, “that the person who nursed his wife used often to join the nurse of Byron when they were out with their respective charges, and one day said to her, as they walked together —

“‘What a pretty boy Byron is! What a pity he has such a leg!’

“On hearing this remark the child’s eyes flashed with anger, and, striking at her with a little whip which he held in his hand, he exclaimed, impatiently —

“‘Dinna’ speak of it.’”

In after years, with evident reference to his own fate, he thus writes:—

Deformity is daring.

It is its essence to o’ertake mankind
By heart and soul, and make itself the equal—
Ay, the superior of the rest. There is
A spur in its halt movements, to become
All that the others cannot, in such things
As still are free to both, to compensate
For stepdame Nature’s avarice at first.

Sir Walter Scott, again, was lame in his right limb, but his figure in early life, we are told, "excepting the blemish in one limb, must have been eminently handsome, being tall, much above the usual standard."

The most remarkable feature of Chatterton's appearance were his eyes, which were grey and very brilliant. One was brighter than the other, appearing even larger than the other when flashing under strong excitement. It has been described by George Calcott as "a kind of hawk's eye," adding that "one could see his soul through it." Barrett, who had observed him keenly as an anatomist, said "he never saw such eyes, fire rolling at the bottom of them." He acknowledged to Sir Herbert Croft that he had often purposely differed in opinion from Chatterton "to see how wonderfully his eye would strike fire, kindle, and blaze up."*

* See "Dict. of Nat. Biog.," 1887, x., 151.

CHAPTER VIII.

DRESS.

Dr. Johnson—Lord Chesterfield—Captain Gronow—Beau Brummell—Lord Alvanley—Sir Lumley Skeffington—Edmund Burke—Sir Philip Francis—Earl of Chatham—George Canning—Sir Charles Napier—Sir Walter Scott—Duke of Wellington—Earl of Carlisle—Earl of Beaconsfield—Lord Petersham—Lord Yarmouth—Prince Regent—Lord Clive—Henry Grattan—Thomas Campbell—Samuel Foote—Porson—Dr. Paley—William Emerson—Thomson—Charles Howard, Duke of Norfolk—Lord Kenyon—Gray—De Quincey—Gibbon—Goldsmith—Mark Akenside—James Bruce—Jeremy Bentham—Charles Lamb—Henry Cavendish—William Battie—William Hazlitt—Lord Hatherley—T. Assheton Smith.

DRESS has always been one of the weaknesses of our great men, many of whom have been just as scrupulously careful of, as others have been indifferent to, their personal appearance. But, in some cases, even slovenliness would seem to have arisen from eccentric vanity; peculiarity in dress having been fostered by a love of notoriety. On

the other hand, through being so much engrossed and absorbed in the weightier matters of life, many of our eminent men have disregarded anything like finery in dress, a habit which in time has drifted into careless indifference. At the same time Dr. Johnson, one of the greatest slovens of his day, strongly inveighed against a disregard of dress from a puritanical view of the matter—"Let us not be found, when our Master calls us, stripping the lace off our waistcoats, but the spirit of our contention from our souls and tongues. Alas! sir, a man who cannot get to heaven in a green coat will not find his way thither the sooner in a grey one." Indifferent as Johnson was to dress, he was evidently of opinion that dress should be good, for he, one day, remarked—"Were I to have anything fine, it should be very fine. Were I to wear a ring it should not be a bawble, but a stone of great value. Were I to wear a laced or embroidered waistcoat, it should be very rich. I had once a very rich laced waistcoat, which I wore the first night of my tragedy."

Lord Chesterfield seems to have been of a similar opinion respecting the quality of dress. Writing to his son in May, 1749, he says—"Mr. Hearte informs me that you are clothed in sumptuous apparel. A young fellow should be so,

especially abroad, where fine clothes are so generally the fashion. Next to their being fine, they should be well made and worn easily; for a man is only the less genteel for a fine coat, if in wearing it, he shows a regard for it, and is not as lazy in it as if it were a plain one." We subsequently find Lord Chesterfield saying, that "at his age he does not wear feathers and red heels, but takes care to have his clothes well made, his wig well combed and powdered, his linen and person extremely clean."

For an amusing and descriptive account of the dandies of sixty years ago—when dress was carried to an extravagant height—we may refer to "The Recollections" of Captain Gronow—a noted dandy himself—who thus writes —

"They were a motley crew, with nothing about them but their insolence. They were generally not high born, nor rich, nor very good looking, nor clever, nor agreeable; and why they arrogated to themselves the right of setting up their own fancied superiority on a self-raised pedestal, and despising their betters, Heaven only knows. They were generally middle-aged, some even elderly men, had large appetites and weak digestions, gambled freely and had no luck. They hated everybody, and abused everybody, and would sit for hours together in White's, or the

pit boxes at the opera, weaving 'tremendous crammers.' They swore a good deal, never laughed, had their own particular slang, looked hazy after dinner, and had been, most of them, patronized at one time or other by Brummell and the Prince Regent."

About the year 1816 trousers began to be worn for evening dress, and Captain Gronow, who patronized a French tailor, tells us that he was invited to Manchester House by Lady Hertford "to have the honour of meeting the Prince." He, accordingly, went to the ball attired à la Française, and, as he thought, in the newest fashion, "with white neckcloth and waistcoat, black trousers, shoes, and silk stockings." But, he was much disconcerted by being informed in the course of the evening that the Prince was surprised at anyone venturing to appear in his presence without knee-breeches, an omission which he considered a want of proper respect to him. In less than a month, however, even the Prince himself attended Lady Cholmondeley's wearing the objectionable article of dress which in Captain Gronow's case had caused so much dissatisfaction.

Speaking of Beau Brummell, he, as is well known, was the very foremost of fops; but he was not handsome, a fall from his charger while

he was in the 10th Hussars having spoilt the outline of his nose. But he carried fashion with him, and London tailors were only too pleased if he condescended to be "rigged out for nothing." A baronet, "following Brummell's dress at a humble distance," asked Schneitzer, his tailor, what cloth he recommended for coats. The tailor answers, "Well, sir, the Prince wears superfine, and Mr. Brummell the Bath coating; but it is immaterial which you choose, Sir John, you must be right. Suppose we say Bath coating? I think Mr. Brummell has a trifle the preference."

Some idea of the elaborate character of his dress may be gathered from the fact that his coat was generally of blue or brown cloth with brass buttons, the tail reaching nearly to the heels, and the collar raised at the back of the head, like the hood of a monk. The buckskin or nankeen breeches* "were so incredibly tight that they could only be put on with immense labour, and when on could only be taken off in the same manner as an eel is divested of its skin." To this was added a waistcoat about four inches long, open on the chest, a frilled shirt, and a stiff, white cravat which rendered all motion of the head impossible, with Hessian boots. His laundress, again, was an important personage, and,

* See *Temple Bar Magazine*, lxiii., 471.

when he dressed for dinner, he tried dozens of neckcloths before he could pronounce the folds of one perfection. Oftentimes his valet, pointing to the heap of discarded muslin, would exclaim, "There are our failures."

Another noted and fashionable dandy was Lord Alvanley, of whom Moore writes:—"He just hits that difficult line between the gentleman and the jolly fellow, and mixes their shades together very pleasantly." Although he wasted a splendid fortune in the pursuit of pleasure, he excelled in all manly sports and exercises, and was a man of considerable ability, very superior to the ordinary run of dandies. It was a joke against Madam de Stäel that she had praised him to his face for *his beauty*, upon the understanding that he possessed no less than one hundred thousand a year—someone having hoaxed the lady's credulity with a story to that effect. Rumour said that she had planned to secure him for her daughter Albertine, or "Libertine," as Brummell was in the habit of calling her, without the slightest foundation for such a perversion of her name.

Equally famous for his extravagant dress was Sir Lumley Skeffington, who actually painted his face, which, as Captain Gronow says, made him look like a French doll. He was most particular

about his scents, his presence, it is said, having reminded most persons of a perfumer's shop. His dandyism naturally provoked ridicule, and Moore, in his diary, alludes to someone having aptly described him as "an admirable specimen of the florid Gothic," while Lord Alvanley referred to him as "A second edition of the *Sleeping Beauty*, bound in calf, richly gilt, and illustrated by many cuts."

Edmund Burke was somewhat negligent in his dress. According to Prior* he was distinguished by a tight brown coat which seemed to impede freedom of motion, and a little bob-wig with curls, which, in addition to his spectacles, made him easily recognized by those, who had never previously seen him, the moment he rose to speak in the House of Commons.

In his younger days Sir Philip Francis paid attention to his attire, but later in life it was fairly open to criticism. It was very difficult, we are told, to make him believe that a coat which had seen long service ought to be cashiered, and he would uphold the merits of such a garment in a manner which was alternately the amusement, and the despair, of his family. Occasionally, it is true, he would make an elaborate toilette for the special honour of some

* "Life of Edmund Burke," J. Prior, 487.

lady whom he admired; but a relapse soon followed.*

Scrupulously neat in his dress was Wm. Pitt, Earl of Chatham. Indeed, it is said that he was never seen on business without a full-dress coat and a tie wig. Similarly, also, George Canning was plain and simple in his dress, but in thorough taste. Indeed, his personal appearance exactly coincided with his character. "No man," it has been observed, "was more far removed from presumption or vanity. He was unostentatious, accessible to the humblest individual; he loved simplicity, and was affable to those about him." Admiral Sir Charles Napier was in early life most eccentric in his dress, and many an anecdote is told of olive-green coat, with gilt buttons, which he wore until it was threadbare. But, as years passed by, and, in the course of his career, he had to contend with the frowns rather than the smiles of fortune, he relaxed his peculiarities, and found that the sterner duties of life required his energy and consideration.

As a young man, Sir Walter Scott was neglectful of his dress, but, about the year 1790, he laid aside his slovenliness, which, it would seem, had given his friends occasion for ridiculing him. According to his friend Mr. William Clark, "he

* See "Memoirs of Sir Philip Francis," Joseph Parkes, ii., 397-8.

now did himself more justice in these little matters, became fond of mixing in general female society, and, as his friend expresses it, 'began to set up for a squire of dames.' "

The Duke of Wellington was scrupulously neat and clean in his dress, which varied very little. In summer he might be recognized by "his low-crowned, narrow-brimmed hat, his white cravat, fastened with a silver buckle behind, his blue frock, white waistcoat, and white trousers. In winter there was the same hat, neckcloth, and frock, with a waistcoat, blue, sometimes red, and blue trousers. He never wore a great coat, but in severe weather threw a short cloak or cape over his shoulders, made of blue cloth, with a white lining. His evening attire, except when he was in mourning, consisted of a blue coat with metal buttons, a white cravat and waistcoat, black breeches, and silk stockings, or tight black pantaloons."* Anyhow, it is not surprising that the Duke was neat in his dress, when we are told that it took him from half-past six to nine every morning to dress.†

Frederick, Earl of Carlisle, was at one time of his life described as having been the best dressed man about town, with the exception of Fox. As is well-known, too, Earl Beaconsfield paid special

* Brialmont's "Life of Duke of Wellington," Edited by G. R. Gleig, iv., 236.

† Maxwell's "Life of Wellington," 1852, 453.

attention to his dress, and in early life he was a thorough dandy. On one occasion, when attending an evening party at the Countess of Blessington's, we are told by an eye-witness how he was seen sitting in the deep window, looking out upon Hyde Park, with the last rays of daylight reflected from the gorgeous gold flowers of a splendidly embroidered waistcoat, patent-leather pumps, a white stick with a black cord and tassel, and a quantity of chains about his neck and pockets, served to make him, even in the dim light, a conspicuous object. The same authority adds, "D'Israeli has one of the most remarkable faces I ever saw. He is lividly pale, and but for the energy of his action and the strength of his lungs, would seem to be a victim of consumption. His eye is black as Erebus, and has the most mocking, lying-in-wait sort of expression conceivable. His mouth is alive with a kind of waking and impatient nervousness, and when he has burst forth, as he does constantly, with a successful cataract of expression, it assumes a curl of triumphant scorn that would be worthy of Mephistopheles. His hair is as extraordinary as his taste in waistcoats; a thick heavy mass of jet-black ringlets falls over his left cheek, almost to his collarless stock, while on the right temple it is parted and put away with the smooth carelessness

of a girl's, and shines most unctuously 'with thy incomparable oil Macassar.'" Such was the future eminent statesman, and however much some may have sneered at what they considered his "affectation" and "personal vanity," wise and discerning men already saw indications in his character of future eminence.

Then there was Lord Petersham, who flattered himself upon his resemblance to the portraits of Henry IV. of France. He was most fastidious about his dress, and, it may be remembered, invented a great-coat known for many years as a Petersham. He had a passion for *brown*, his carriages having been of that hue, as well as his horses, harness, and livery. This eccentricity was commonly supposed to have had reference to a youthful affection of his lordship for a fair, but fickle, widow of the name of Brown.

An intimate friend of the Prince Regent was Lord Yarmouth—popularly known as "Red Herrings" from his red whiskers and hair—who was also conspicuous in his day for the fashion of his dress, concerning whose foppish peculiarities many humorous allusions occur. In the "Odes of Horace, done into English by several persons of fashion," a free translation of one* has been put down to the Regent. It begins "Come Y—m—th,

* Lib. ii., Od. 9.

my boy, never trouble your brains," etc., and goes on in the third stanza :—

Brisk let us revel, while revel we may,
For the gay bloom of fifty soon passes away,
And then people get fat,
And infirm, and—all that ;
And a wig, I confess it, so clumsily sits,
That it frightens the little loves out of their wits.

Thy whiskers, too, Y—m—th, alas ! even they,
Though so rosy they burn,
Too quickly must turn
(What a heart-breaking change for the whiskers) to grey.

Again, in the " new costume of the Ministers," the Regent is represented as asking himself, " Whom shall I dress next ? "

He looks in the glass, but perfection is there,
Wig, whiskers, and chin-tufts, all right to a hair,
Not a single ex-curl on his forehead he traces,
For curls are like Ministers, strange as the case is,
The *false* they are, the more firm in their places.
His coat he next views, but the coat, who could doubt ?
For his Y—m—th's own Frenchified hand cut it out.

The greatest care was paid by Lord Clive, even to the most trifling part of his dress.* Writing on one occasion from India, to his friend Mr. Orme, he gives a most amusing instance of his extreme care for his personal appearance. " I must now trouble you," he says, " with a few commissions concerning family affairs. Imprimis, what you can produce must be of the best and finest you can get for love or money ; two hundred shirts,

* " Memoirs of Lord Clive," ii., 182.

the wristbands worked, some of the ruffles worked with a border, either in squares or points, and the rest plain; stocks, neckcloth, and handkerchiefs in proportion; three corge* of the finest stockings, several pieces of plain and spotted muslin, three yards wide, for aprons, book muslins, cambrics, a few pieces of the finest dimity, and a complete set of table linen, of Fort St. David's diaper, made for the purpose."

In a list of packages which was sent to him at Bengal by his father, one is a box of wigs, but whether Clive resorted to this ornament from want of hair, or from deference to the fashion of the period, is uncertain. Anyhow, there is an anecdote of his boyhood which proves how essential a wig was considered to all who were well dressed. Clive had been admitted by a relation to be one of the spectators when George II. visited the Tower of London. "Nothing," we are told, "was wanted in the boy's dress to prepare him for the honour of approaching majesty except a wig. To supply this want one was lent him by his relative—who was Captain of the Tower—and his appearance in this costume was so singular as to attract the notice and smiles of the King, who inquired who he was, and spoke to him in a very kind and gracious manner."†

* A corge is twenty pair.

† *Ibid.*, ii., 183.

Henry Grattan was slovenly in his dress, and Sir Jonah Barrington has given an amusing account of his appearance at an advanced period of his life. It seems that a Colonel Burr and Mr. Randolph, from America, anxious to behold the great Irish orator, were taken one morning to his house by Sir Jonah. After waiting a time, "at length the door opened, and in hopped a small, bent figure—meagre, yellow, and ordinary, with one slipper and one shoe, his breeches' knees loose, his cravat hanging down, his shirt and his coat sleeves tucked up high, and an old hat upon his head." Much was their surprise on being informed that this eccentric-looking person was the great Grattan.

Thomas Campbell was a dandy, and Byron speaks of him as "dressed to spruceness," with a blue coat and a new wig, and looking as if Apollo had sent him a birthday suit or a wedding garment; and yet he was careless in his manners and habits, and Lady Morgan relates that when dining with Lord Aberdeen, Mannors Sutton, and the Duchess of Gordon, he put his knife in the salt-cellar to help himself to the condiment.

Strangely inconsistent in many things was Samuel Foote, and especially in his dress. His clothes were tawdrily splashed with gold lace, and it is said that in his young days, and in the fluc-

tuation of his finances, he walked about in boots to conceal his want of stockings, and, that on receiving a supply of money, he expended it all upon a diamond ring, instead of purchasing the necessary articles of hosiery.

Many are the amusing anecdotes told of Porson's slovenly attire. One evening he went to a ball at the assembly rooms at Bath, escorted by Dr. Davis, a physician of the place, who introduced him to the Rev. Richard Warner. When Porson separated from him, King, the master of the ceremonies, stepped forward and said —

"Pray, Mr. Warner, who is that man you have been speaking to? I can't say I much like his appearance."

"To own the truth," says Warner,* "Porson, with lank, uncombed locks, a loose neckcloth, and wrinkled stockings, exhibited a striking contrast to the gorgeous crowd around. I replied, however," he continues —

"Who is that gentleman, Mr. King? The greatest man that has visited your rooms since their first erection. It is the celebrated Porson, the most profound scholar in Europe, who has more Greek under that mop of hair than can be found in all the heads in the room—aye, if we even include those of the orchestra."

* "Warner's Lit. Recollections," ii., 6.

"Indeed," said the dancing-master, who at once went off to attend to his dancing.

On another occasion his friend Cleaver Banks invited him to dine with him at an hotel at the West End, but he never made his appearance. Afterwards, when Banks asked him why he had not kept his engagement, Porson replied that he "*had* come." Banks could only conjecture that the waiters, seeing his shabby dress, and not knowing who he was, had offered him some insult, which had made him indignantly return home.* Sometimes he was so dirty and untidy as to be refused admittance by servants at the houses of his friends. He once walked out of town with Beloe to Highgate, and on their return they were overtaken by a violent shower of rain, and both drenched to the skin. On arriving at Beloe's residence warm and dry cloaks were provided for them, but Porson obstinately refused to make any change in his dress. He drank three glasses of brandy, but sat in his wet garments the whole evening.

Dr. Paley, in early life, was very careless about his dress, which gave rise to a proverbial remark, long traditional in his college—Christ's, Cambridge—"You may be a sloven, but don't think you are a Paley." Accordingly he attracted, says his

* Rogers' Table Talk, "Porsoniana," 305.

biographer,* "more than common notice when he appeared in the public schools to keep his first *act*, under Mr. Blakeway, of Magdalen College, in which Mr. Hall, of St. John's, was his first opponent, with his hair full dressed, and in a deep ruffled shirt and new silk stockings, which, aided by his gestures, his actions, and his whole manner, when earnestly engaged in the debate, excited no small mirth among the spectators."

In his dress William Emerson was shabby and untidy, wearing a dirty wig half off his head, and a hat which, when the rim had lost its elasticity, was cut by him, with a pair of shears, into the shape of a jockey's cap.

Indifferent, again, as far as his dress was concerned, was the poet Thomson, his clothes generally having been remarkably plain, and carelessly put on. But he was particular about his wig, and William Taylor, who regularly dressed the poet, and kept in order his numerous wigs, says:—"He was very extravagant with his wigs. I have seen a dozen at a time hanging up in my master's shop, and all of them so big that nobody else could wear them."

So careless and slovenly in his dress was Charles Howard, Duke of Norfolk, that on one occasion he created "a buzz of wonder" in the

* Meadley's "Memoirs of Paley," 28.

House of Lords by appearing in a new coat, and on another, while sitting in the front row of a box at the theatre, he was supposed to be a place-keeper, and threatened with an ignominious expulsion for not retiring at the end of the first act.

Almost as shabby and sordid in his attire was Lord Kenyon, whose dress, it is said, when a leading advocate at the bar, would have disgraced a copying clerk. Indeed, the wits of his day went so far as to maintain that when he kissed hands upon his elevation to the attorney's place, he actually went into court in a second-hand suit purchased from Lord Stormont's *valet*.

In the letter attributed to him by a clever writer in the *Rolliard*, he is represented as saying:—"My income has been cruelly estimated at seven, or, as some will have it, eight thousand pounds per annum. I shall save myself the mortification of denying that I am rich, and refer you to the constant habits and whole tenour of my life. The proof to my friends is easy. My tailor's bill for the last fifteen years is a record of the most indisputable authority. Malicious souls may direct you, perhaps, to Lord Stormont's *valet de chambre*, and can vouch the anecdote, that on the day when I kissed hands for my appointment to the office of Attorney General I appeared in a lace waistcoat,

but despise the insinuation ; nor is this the only instance in which I am obliged to diminish my wants, and apportion them to my very limited means. Lady K. will be my witness that until my last appointment I was an utter stranger to the luxury of a pocket handkerchief."

Lord Kenyon's curious eccentricity gave rise to many ludicrous stories. Thus, it is related that, on one occasion, "in the case of an action brought for the non-fulfilment of a contract on a large scale for shoes, the question mainly was whether or not they were well and soundly made, and with the best materials. A number of witnesses were called ; one of them, a first-rate hand in the craft, being closely questioned, returned contradictory answers, when the Chief Justice observed, pointing to his own shoes, which were regularly bestridden by the broad silver buckle of the day—

" 'Were the shoes anything like these ?' "

" 'No, my lord,' replied the witness, 'they were a good deal better, and more genteeler.' "

In his appearance and gait, Gray was finical, paying a foppish attention to dress ; and De Quincey, in his " *Autobiographical Recollections*," amusingly relates how, when quite a lad, he was walking with his elder brother in the neighbourhood of Greenhays, the paternal mansion on the outskirts of Manchester, a boy issued from a

factory, and called out insultingly after them, "Halloa! bricks," adding derisive shouts of "Boots! boots!" in allusion to the fact that they were wearing Hessian boots—"a crime that could not be forgotten in Lancashire of that day, because it expressed the double offence of being aristocratic, and being outlandish."

Gibbon, although he paid attention to his attire, and was in harmony amongst those with whom he mixed, was not given to ostentatious parade. George Coleman introduces him in one of his sketches as a kind of set-off to Johnson. "On the day I first sat down with Johnson in his rusty brown suit and his black worsted stockings, Gibbon," he adds, "was placed opposite me in a suit of flowered velvet, with a bag and sword."

Clothes, again, were destined to make Goldsmith ridiculous through life, his passion for misplaced finery justly exciting the laughter even of his friends. He began his silly extravagance in his student days, at Edinburgh, and Mr. Forster quotes from a set of tailor's bills in which appear such items as "silver hat-lace," "rich sky-blue satin," "Genoa velvet," and "best superfine high claret coloured cloth," at nineteen shillings a yard. In short, as the *Edinburgh Reviewer* says, "he was one of the frights whom we sometimes see, in both sexes, haunted by a strange passion to attract

attention in an ungainly person by misplaced finery."

His appearance before the Bishop in scarlet breeches, when a candidate for orders, marvellously corresponds with his strutting up and down the room, at the Literary Club, bragging of his dress. When, too, he tried to practice as a doctor, he got by hook or by crook a black velvet suit, and looked, writes Thackeray, "as big and as grand as he could, and kept his hat over a patch on the old coat. In better days he bloomed out in plum-colour, in blue silk, and new velvet." Who can wonder, then, that Joseph Warton and Horace Walpole talked of the solemn coxcomb "silly Doctor Goldsmith?"

Those again who liked him, and admired his talent, could not keep their countenance at his awkward finery. It was only natural that the boys should hoot at him in the streets; oftentimes, also, he would reproach himself with buying a suit to look in it like a fool. But, unfortunately, the acknowledgment of a fault and the reformation of it are two things which had not the slightest connection in the life of Goldsmith. He persevered in the same habit. On one occasion Sir Joshua Reynolds found him kicking a bundle about his room, which contained an expensive masquerade dress. Its temporary end having

been served, he was trying, he said, to extract the value from it in exercise.

Mark Akenside, more generally known as a poet than a physician, was known for the neatness and elegance of his dress. "He wore a large white, stiff-curled wig, and carried a long sword; and this, it is said, together with a hitch in his gait, and a pale, pompous, and solemn countenance, made his appearance altogether unpromising, if not grotesque."

The famous traveller, James Bruce, paid particular attention to his dress, especially during his travels, the fatigue and danger of which, it is said, never prevented him from appearing in the most elegant costume of the different countries he visited. But, as has been observed, this care of his personal appearance was only in accordance with the character, which oftentimes showed indications of pomposity and ostentation, especially when he was Consul. Thus the story runs, that the Bey of Cairo having, after a long conversation, ordered him a purse of sequins, he declined accepting anything more than a single orange, saying to the Bey, who requested to know his reason, "I am an Englishman, and the servant of the greatest king in Europe; it is not the custom of my country to receive pecuniary gratuities from foreign princes, without the approbation of our sovereign."

From Jeremy Bentham's memoranda, and his letters, it is plain that he must have been as picturesque in his conversation as in his dress. At home, in his hermitage, he was of striking appearance—his white hair, long and flowing, his neck bare, in a quaker cut coat, list shoes, and white worsted stockings drawn over his breeched knees. In his own secluded home he was no respecter of persons, and here is one of his private dinner parties:—"I should like to invite a Yankee and a negro, a lord and a beggar, to my table." In short, his life and habits were throughout characteristic of the man, and he had long outlived even the wish to be taken notice of even by lords.

A curious eccentricity of Charles Lamb was always to dress in black. "I take it," he says, "to be the proper costume of an author." When this peculiarity of dress was once objected to at a wedding, he pleaded the rarest apology in the fable, that "he had no other." His clothes were entirely black, and he wore long black gaiters up to the knees.

The famous chemist, Henry Cavendish, was eccentric in his mode of dress, for he always wore clothes made of grey cloth—a fashion which had been popular in his youthful days. In this respect he was not unlike the well-known politician, John Cartwright, who never changed the make of his

clothes to suit the fashions of the day. And yet, he was so graceful in his deportment, and so thoroughly carried the airs of a gentleman, that, a young lady once remarked :—

“If I had seen Major Cartwright begging and in rags, I must have instinctively bowed to him.”

Among other eccentricities, the distinguished physician, William Battie, would, during his sojourns in the country, dress like, and aim to be taken for, one of his own day labourers; a peculiarity which oftentimes, naturally, caused much amusement amongst his friends.

Again, William Hazlitt was generally untidy in his dress, and never enjoyed the credit of having new clothes. But a friend, who knew him well during the last thirteen years of his life, said that he was never more astonished than when he saw Hazlitt ready-dressed to go to dinner at Mr. Curran's. On this occasion he wore “a blue coat and gilt buttons, black smalls, silk stockings, and a white cravat, and he looked the gentleman.” But, we are told, he did not often do himself this justice; the process of the toilet proved irksome. It is true his second wife coaxed him for a time into conforming to the fashions of the day, but it was not for long that she was successful, and abandoned the attempt in despair.

Lord Hatherley was excessively tenacious of

all habits and customs which he had once adopted, and, we are told,* he must have been nearly, if not quite the last man in England, who wore a blue tail coat and metal buttons, which he continued to do down to the year 1852, or about the time when he became judge.

T. Assheton Smith was in the habit of saying of himself, that he was the plainest man in England, but generally added, "that fellow Jack Musters spoilt my beauty,"† his famous battle with him having been long spoken of by Etonians as one of the most hard fought battles ever recorded in the annals of youthful pugilism. His ordinary dress was a blue coat with brass buttons, and a buff waistcoat. During the hunting season he dined in scarlet, the inside of his coat being lined with white silk.

* "Memoirs of Lord Hatherley," W. R. W. Stephens, ii., 279.

† Mr. Musters is well known to every reader of Lord Byron, as the successful rival of the poet for the hand of Mary Chaworth. See "Life of T. Assheton Smith," by Sir J. E. Wilmot, 158.

CHAPTER IX.

FACULTY OF MEMORY.

Henry Fawcett—General Chatterie—Edmund Burke—Sir James Mackintosh—Lord North—Sir Sydney Smith—Duke of Wellington—Lord Clyde—Lord Nelson—Dr. Johnson—Dr. George Fordyce—Porson—Hugh Miller—Sir Walter Scott—Lord Byron—Bishop Warburton—Dr. Samuel Clarke—Dean Milman—Dean Milner—Abernethy—Lord Stowell—Lord Hardwicke—Charles Mathews—Dr. Priestley—Macready—James Watt—Sir William Hamilton—Theodore Hook—Walter Savage Landor—Henry Crabb Robinson—John Kemble—Lord Macaulay—Prof. Conington—George Grote—Sir George Cornwall Lewis—Charles Darwin—Thomas Carlyle—De Quincey—Lord Plunket.

It has been often said that one of the primary qualifications of a great man is power of memory, but, in numerous instances, this faculty has been exhibited in such a marked degree as to create surprise even amongst those noted for the strength of their memories. Illustrations of such feats of memory, apart from their psychological value,

have always attracted interest and admiration, although they have deepened the puzzle as to why, in some men, memory should be strong, and in others weak. Problems of this kind, however difficult of solution they may be, only add to the marvels that surround human life, and, in spite of undergoing patient inquiry, will probably ever remain unsolved. Thus, in our Parliamentary history, a curious instance of memory occurred some years ago, and one which, recorded in Grant's "Random Recollections of the House of Commons," is of special interest at the present time :— "This gentleman (Mr. Tennent, M.P. for Belfast), on the occasion of Mr. O'Connell's motion for the repeal of the union in 1834, actually repeated a speech against the measure, without the least hesitation in a single instance, or the slightest mistake, which occupied him three hours and a half in the delivery, and, what renders the effort still more surprising, it was a speech full of minute calculations and figures. He was so confident of the trustworthiness of his memory that he sent the manuscript of his speech to the newspaper before he delivered it."

With this extraordinary effort of memory may be compared the delivery of a speech by Mr. Fawcett at Brighton in the year 1874. Before delivering it we are told that he rehearsed the

whole of it to one of the leading reporters who had called on him for the chief points on which he intended to speak. Later on, while the speech proper was being delivered, the original copy made at the rehearsal was checked over, word for word, and, from beginning to end, so perfectly had the speech been committed to memory, there was not one single mistake, except that in one place a word had been substituted for its equivalent in the notes.

Similarly, many astounding stories are told of the marvellous feats of memory of General Chatterie; and in the *Field* for January 20, 1886, in an obituary notice of this well-known man it is said:—"On the goodness of his memory we have before remarked, and we will confirm it by stating that, for a bet, he learned the *Morning Post* of a particular day, and repeated every word of it, including advertisements." But, as a correspondent of "Notes and Queries" has pointed out, this statement has never been verified, although the fact of his extraordinary memory has never been denied.

A striking instance of the powers of memory was exemplified in the case of Edmund Burke, of whom many interesting anecdotes are told. On one occasion he met at a dinner party an Arch-deacon of Brecon, a man of considerable learning

and antiquarian research, who started several subjects of conversation that few of the company felt inclined, or qualified, to discuss. For some time Burke remained silent, until, in the midst of a fluent account of some of Cæsar's operations in Britain, he stopped the Archdeacon by pointing out a material error as to facts, which changed the whole complexion of the story.

An obscure Latin work was next quoted, when Burke again corrected the Archdeacon, and, on a scarce volume of ancient geography being mentioned, Burke proved himself well acquainted with the book in question.

At the close of the evening, when the guests took their departure, the Archdeacon, who naturally felt somewhat humiliated, honestly remarked: "I confess I went previously prepared to speak on these subjects, for, knowing that I was to meet him, and hearing that he was acquainted with almost everything, I had determined to put his knowledge to the test, and, for this purpose, had spent much of the morning in my study. My memory, however, proved more treacherous than I had imagined."

Equally gifted in his memory was Sir James Mackintosh, who sometimes startled his friends by the fund of information he would impart on all conceivable subjects, remembering "things,

words, thoughts, dates, and everything that was wanted."* In the course of his conversation the great thoughts and fine sayings of the eminent men of all ages "were ultimately present to his recollection, and came out in a dazzling and delightful" manner.

Notwithstanding Lord North's "disagreeable utterance, inelegant delivery, and awkward manner," his extraordinary power of language and command of memory made him an effective speaker. Indeed, his memory was so retentive that "it enabled him to carry in his mind every argument that had been urged in the course of a debate. His extensive knowledge of books and men, his abundance of shrewd common sense, his perfect presence of mind and complete mastery over his temper, and lastly, his thorough knowledge of the rules, constitution, and character of the House of Commons, unquestionably qualified him to figure as a debater of no mean order."†

Sir Sidney Smith had an extraordinary memory always ready, and could repeat pages of poetry, English, Latin, and French, but when, where, or how he learned them no one of his family pretended to know. Anyhow, they were always ready and appropriate in company, when conversation turned that way.

* "Life of Sir J. Mackintosh," ii., 499-500.

† Jesse's "Celebrated Etonians," ii., 251.

Of the great tenacity of the Duke of Wellington's memory many anecdotes are told. His memory never forsook him to the last, and manifested itself in the management of great as of small matters. Thus, in the year 1843, when the terror of the Sikh invasion was at its height, the Duke was requested by the Government of the day to draw up a plan for the defence of India. He did so, and his memorandum, says Lord Ellesmere, "embraced all three presidencies, and was full of geographical details. It had been written, as he told me, without reference either to a map or a gazetteer."*

While Inspector-General of Infantry, Lord Clyde gave a signal proof of the remarkable faculty he possessed for remembering those who had served under him. "While I was inspecting the depôt at Chichester," he says, "I noticed that an old man—evidently a soldier, though in plain clothes—was constantly on the ground watching my movements. At the end of the inspection, as I was leaving the barrack-yard, he came towards me, drew himself up, made the military salute, and, with much respect, said —

" 'Sir Colin, may I speak to you? Look at me, sir. Do you recollect me?'

* See Brailmont's "Life of Wellington," edit. by G. R. Gleig, iv., 259.

"I looked at him, and replied —

" 'Yes, I do.'

" 'What is my name?'

"I told him.

" 'Yes, sir, and where did you last see me?'

" 'In the breach of San Sebastian, badly wounded by my side.'

" 'Right, sir.'

" 'I can tell you something more. You were No. —, in the front rank of my company.'

" 'Right, sir.' "

This was one of those rare instances of memory which, but for the authenticity of the record, would almost be regarded as incredible.

In the same way, Lord Nelson never forgot a face that he had once seen. The story goes that during a visit to Salisbury, in December, in the year 1800, he recognized one sailor among the crowd who had served under him at the Nile, and another who had assisted at the amputation of his arm, after the unsuccessful attack on Santa Cruz.

Throughout life, Dr. Johnson, as is well known, was eminent for his wonderful memory, his recollection of facts having been almost incredible. Indeed, when only a child in petticoats, his mother one morning put the Common Prayer Book in his hands, pointed to the Collect for the day, and said —

"Sam, you must get this by heart."

She went upstairs, but, by the time she had reached the second floor, she heard him following her.

"What's the matter?" said she.

"I can say it," he replied; and he did so, though he could not have read it more than once.

But, marvellously good as Johnson's memory was, he one day remarked, "Memory will play strange tricks. One sometimes loses a single word; I once lost *fugaces* in the ode 'Posthume, Posthume.'"

"I mentioned to him," adds Boswell, "that a worthy gentleman of my acquaintance actually forgot his own name. To which he replied—'Sir, that was a morbid oblivion.'"

Dr. George Fordyce, to whom reference has already been made, had a prodigious memory, and even composed his works for publication from the store laid up in his retentive mind.

Porson's memory, it may be remembered, was so retentive that he actually once remarked it was a source of misery to him, as he could never forget anything—even what he wished not to remember. In truth, so marvellous was his memory that there were, it is said, few subjects concerning which he was not able to illustrate his

knowledge, by quotations from the writings of his own, and other countries.

Hugh Miller's memory was full of English poetry, and, at sauntering times, in waiting for omnibuses, or the like, he would pour out stanza after stanza with astonishing profusion.

Again, numerous illustrations are recorded of Sir Walter Scott's splendid memory. "Not only," writes Lockhart, "did he recollect every stanza of any ancient ditty of chivalry, or romance, that had once excited his imagination, but it seemed as if he remembered everything without exception, if it were in anything like the shape of verse, that he had ever read." Hogg used to relate, that one day, lamenting in Sir Walter Scott's presence his having lost his only copy of a long ballad composed by him in his early days, and of which he then could recall merely the subject and one or two fragments, Scott said to him, with a smile, "Take your pencil, Jamie, and I'll dictate your ballad to you word for word," which was done accordingly. Lockhart also gives the following anecdote related by Andrew Shortrede:—"One morning at breakfast, in my father's house, shortly after one of Sir Walter's severe illnesses, he was asked to partake of some of 'the baked meats that coldly did furnish forth the *breakfast* table.'

"'No, no,' he answered; 'I bear in mind at

present, Bob, the advice of your old friend, Dr. Weir —

“ ‘From season’d meats avert your eyes,
From hams, and tongues, and pigeon pies—
A venison pasty set before ye,
Each bit you eat—*memento mori.*’

“ This was a verse of a clever rhyming prescription sent out some thirty years before, and which my father then remembered to have repeated upon one of the Liddesdale raids. The verses had almost entirely escaped his memory, but Sir Walter was able to give us a long screed of them.”

Lord Byron, again, had a fine memory, and richly laden with information, he often astonished his friends by the versatility of his knowledge.

A ripe scholar, Bishop Warburton, was gifted with a copious memory, which enabled him to illustrate his conversation with the most rich and varied stories of learning. Indeed, his knowledge of books, it is said, was so wide as to allow him to speak on almost any subject. Charles York, who met him at his first visit to Pope, represents himself as delighted with the opportunities which he had of conversing with him; describing him as a man “surprisingly communicative, of prodigious memory, and of enchanting fancy.” “The fluency and correctness of his conversation,” he adds, “were beyond most men.”

Dr. Samuel Clarke, who was always remarkable for his careful economy of time, generally carried a book in his pocket, and is said never to have forgotten anything he had once learned.

His wonderful memory enabled Dean Milman to turn his extensive reading, whenever necessary, to good account. One story is told of his readiness in quoting from the "Fathers." He "was walking with Dr. Liddon, then a young man, on a visit to Lamborne, who was going to preach the Latin sermon before the University of Oxford. Mr. Liddon told him the subject he intended to select, and asked him if he remembered anything in St. Augustine bearing upon it. He walked on two or three minutes in silence, and then began quoting passages from St. Augustine which occurred to him."*

He frequently lectured at the Theological College, at Cuddesdon, and in the year 1865, being asked one day to lecture on "St. Cyprian and St. Anselm" the following week, he replied, "I will come; I have read all Anselm." The impression made by his lectures was thus described by one of his hearers:—"They took my fancy immensely; I had never heard such a speaker as Mr. Milman. He appeared familiar with all the

* "Memoirs of Robert Milman, D.D.," by Frances Maria Milman, 1879, 8.

history, philosophy, and general life of those ages. I think his lectures gave me more help in forming my ideas about the mediæval Church, and the relation of philosophy to religion, than anything I ever read or heard."

Similarly, Dean Milner was gifted with a fine memory, which enabled him effectually to retain the stores of learning which he had amassed.* He possessed, too, in an extraordinary degree, the useful faculty of being able at any moment to call all his powers into full action. "Whatever subject might be proposed," writes his niece, "he was always able to seize at once upon its main points, and to bring his varied resources immediately to bear upon it."

Among some of the curious illustrations of Abernethy's remarkable memory may be quoted a well-known one, which is an instance of his playful humour in social life:—A friend, dining with him, on a birthday of Mrs. Abernethy's, had composed some verses in honour of the occasion, which he repeated to the family circle after dinner.

"Ah!" said Abernethy, smiling, "that is a good joke, now, your pretending to have written those verses."

His friend simply rejoined, "That, such as they were, they were certainly his own."

* "Life of Dean Milner," by Mary Milner, 1842, 717.

After a little good-natured bantering, he began to grow annoyed at Abernethy's apparent incredulity, who, thinking it time to finish the joke, said —

"I know those very verses very well, and could say them by heart."

His friend, somewhat incredulous, was soon convinced by Abernethy's repeating them throughout correctly, and with the greatest apparent ease.*

For table-talk Lord Stowell had a high reputation; for his memory, enriched with the spoils of all ages, was tenacious and ready. "At times," says Mr. Surtees, "he would exhibit vast stores of learning; his classical quotations, often humorously applied, being always effective. A striking anecdote has been recorded of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke, which proves the extraordinary power of his memory, and the attention which he bestowed on his religious as well as secular duties:—One day Dr. Nicolls called on him for the purpose of presenting to his lordship the newly-published sermons of Bishop Sherlock, most of which had been preached at the Temple Church, where Lord Hardwicke was in the habit of attending divine service while a bencher of that Society. The Chancellor asked Dr. Nicolls if

* "Memoirs of Abernethy," by G. Macilwain, 1856, 19-20.

there was not a sermon on St. John xx., v. 30-31, among the collection, and on being told there was, the Lord Chancellor desired him to turn to the conclusion, and at once repeated the eloquent passage with which the sermon ends, and which he had retained in his memory from having heard the sermon preached thirty years before.*

Charles Mathews prided himself on his tenacious memory, and in writing his life tells us that he never kept a journal, or diary, or made a memorandum of a conversation in his life. And yet, he adds, "I fearlessly pledge myself to the declaration that I can perfectly recollect and repeat most of the anecdotes, and conversations, of remarkable persons, whom I have met in early life, with as much facility as I related them at the time they happened."

When acting he could never bear to be prompted, and any attempt to do so would have increased his embarrassment had he been imperfect. On only one occasion during his professional career did his memory fail him.† Early in his London engagement at the Haymarket he had to perform "Caleb Quotem," in the *Wags of Windsor*. On appearing on the stage, instead of the usual address, he bowed to Mr. Farley, who performed

* "Life of Lord Hardwicke," ii., 479.

† "Life and Correspondence of C. Mathews," 1860, 116.

"Captain Beaugard," and, after a minute's pause, said to him —

"My name, sir, is 'Lingo.'"

Mr. Farley, quite thrown off his guard by the extraordinary lapse in the actor's memory, exclaimed, quickly —

"The devil it is!"

The audience laughed, and Mathews was in his turn puzzled. In vain the prompter and performers endeavoured to convey the right speech, but, fortunately, at length his recollection returned, and he proceeded with his usual volubility and correctness. Mathews never could account for this failure of memory, for he was not in a nervous state, and, as his biographer says, "was never in the most trifling degree addicted to the poisoned cup."

Alluding to failure of memory, it may be remembered that Dr. Priestley laid occasionally under such intellectual disadvantage. Thus, to quote his own words, "I have, from an early period, been subject to a most humbling failure of recollection, so that I have sometimes lost all ideas of both persons and things that I have been conversant with. I have so completely forgotten what I have myself published that, in reading my own writings, what I find in them often appears perfectly new to me, and I have more than once

made experiments, the results of which had been published by me."

He also records another equally strange experience, and writes :—"I had to ascertain something which had been the subject of much discussion relating to the Jewish Passover, and, for that purpose, had to consult and compare several writers. This I accordingly did, and digested the result in the compass of a few paragraphs, which I wrote in shorthand. But, having mislaid the paper, and my attention having been drawn off to other things, in the space of a fortnight I did the same thing over again, and should never have discovered that I had done it twice if, after the second paper was transcribed for the press, I had not accidentally found the former, which I viewed with a degree of terror."

Like Mathews, Macready had a wonderfully retentive memory, an interesting instance of which he gives in his "Reminiscences." It seems that, during a fortnight's campaign at Dumfries, the attendance was uniformly good, but as several of the company had been drafted off to Leicester, the stock of plays was therefore limited. But "a night closed would have been so much money refused. All our available plays were arranged, and for one night there was none within our scanty company's means. It occurred to me that

all the players had acted in the *Foundling of the Forest*, and, sending for the prompter to ascertain it, I desired him to bring me the book, that I might study 'Florian' for the occasion.

" 'Sir, there is no book,' was his answer.

" This seemed checkmate, but, from having got up the play at Newcastle, and having been present several times at its performance three years before, I recollected much of the part, and observing to him that as the players would be able to repeat to me their cues (*i.e.*, the ends of my speeches to them), I would answer for managing it, and ordered the play to be announced."

The play went off successfully, and with great applause from a very full attendance.

From an early age James Watt was noted for his retentive memory, and when upwards of eighty years of age he paid a visit to Scotland. Sir Walter Scott, speaking of this occasion, tells us that there were assembled to meet him "about half a score of our Northern Lights," and adds:—"His talents and fancy overflowed on every subject. One gentleman was a deep philologist. He talked with him on the origin of the alphabet as if he had been coeval with Cadmus. Another—a celebrated critic—you would have said the old man had studied political economy and belles-lettres all his life. Of science it is

unnecessary to speak—it was his own distinguished walk. And yet, Captain Clutterbuck, when he spoke with your countryman, Jedediah Cleishbotham, you would have sworn he had been coeval with Claver'se and Burley, with the persecutors and persecuted, and could number every shot the dragoons had fired at the fugitive Covenanters. In fact, we discovered that no novel of the least celebrity escaped his perusal, and that the gifted man of science was as much addicted to the productions of your native country—in other words, as shameless and obstinate a peruser of novels—as if he had been a very milliner's apprentice of eighteen.”

His astonishing memory, it has been remarked, was aided, no doubt, in a great measure by a still higher and rarer faculty—by his power of digesting and arranging in its proper place all the information he received, and of casting aside and rejecting, as it were, instinctively whatever was worthless or immaterial. Every conception that was suggested to his mind seemed instantly to take its place amongst its other rich furniture, and to be condensed into the smallest and most convenient form.*

Like his character, Sir William Hamilton's memory—which was unusually retentive—was

* See Muirhead's "Life of Watt," 513-14.

singularly precise and orderly in storing up, and reproducing when necessary, what had been laid up in it. There was a system of method in what he retained in his memory that enabled him with an amazing promptness to display, when occasion required, any facts or theories. "His faculty," writes Mr. Veitch,* "was little, if at all, impaired, even to the latter end of life, and many of his students, even during the latter years of his teaching, will remember the vast range, the accuracy, the promptitude of memory, which he displayed on those occasions when, as was the practice in the class, students rose to give historical accounts to men or doctrines, of the subjects of which he was beforehand totally unaware."

Theodore Hook had a remarkable memory—indeed, so much so that few, perhaps, have ever excelled him in this respect. One day he undertook to repeat, in proper order, all the names of the shopkeepers on one side of Oxford Street, of which he omitted but one. On another occasion his astounding power of memory was displayed at a friend's house. Selecting as a topic of conversation the procession of the Equinoxes, he entrapped his host, who had the reputation of being very learned, into a discussion on the complex subject, but he being ignorant of the matter tried to turn the conversation.

* "Memoir of Sir W. Hamilton," 384.

Hook, however, was not to be so easily silenced, and promptly said —

“My dear sir, you do not seem to have explained the matter. Everybody, of course, is aware that the most obvious of all the celestial motions is the diurnal revolution of the starry heavens,” and then he proceeded to repeat from the “*Encyclopædia Britannica*” an entire article on the subject—a couple of columns in length—which he had previously learned for the occasion, although he did not understand a word of it, and concluded by saying, “You can, doubtless, put the thing in a much clearer light. I confess the mutation of the axis, etc., is a little beyond me.”

The joke, writes Mr. Barham, now became obvious. Others pursued it, and at last the disconcerted host was compelled to throw himself on the mercy of the foe. Among further extraordinary feats of memory may be mentioned Hook’s running over, after a single perusal, the whole list of advertisements in *The Times* newspaper.

The memory of Walter Savage Landor, writes Mr. Forster,* was most astonishing, and he used to boast that he could always quote securely from it, but he trusted sometimes too much to it and made mistakes.

Again, Henry Crabb Robinson had a very reten-

* *Life of*, by J. Forster, ii., 205.

tive memory, which served him to good purpose. According to Dr. Sadler,* "he was remarkable for the extent to which he could repeat Wordsworth's poems from memory, and this use of them," he adds, "he retained to the end. At ninety and ninety-one he quoted them with perfect ease. This new possession, which he speaks of as a great source of happiness to him, had doubtless no small part in making his character what it was." But on one occasion, at any rate, his memory failed him. In his "Diary," under Feb. 15, 1829, he makes this entry:—"I was engaged to dine with Mr. Wansey, at Walthamstow. When I arrived there I was in the greatest distress through having forgotten the name, and it was not until after an hour's worry that I recollected he was a Unitarian, which would answer as well, for I instantly proceeded to Mr. Cogan's. Having been shown into a room, young Mr. Cogan came.

" 'Your commands, sir?'

" 'Mr. Cogan, I have taken the liberty to call on you in order to know where I am to dine to-day,' and he smiled. I went on: 'The truth is, I have accepted an invitation to dine with a gentleman, a recent acquaintance, whose name I have

* "Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence," edit. by T. Sadler, 1872, ii., 366.

forgotten, but I am sure you can tell me, for he is a Unitarian, and the Unitarians are very few here.'

"And before I had gone far in my description, he said —

" 'This can be no other than Mr. Wansey. And now, may I ask your name?'

" 'No, thank you, I am much obliged to you for enabling me to get a dinner, but that is no reason why I should enable you to make me table-talk for the next nine days.'

"He laughed.

" 'There is no use your attempting to conceal your name, I know who you are, and, as a proof, I can tell you that a namesake of yours has been dining with us, an old fellow circuitteer of yours. We have just finished dinner in the old Dissenting fashion. My father and mother will be very glad to see you.'

"Accordingly, I went and sat with the Cogans a couple of hours."*

As is generally known, John Kemble had an excellent memory, and Kelly, in his "Reminiscences," thus writes:—"I have often heard

* Mr. Cogan kept a school, and was almost the only Dissenting schoolmaster whose competence as a Greek scholar was recognized by Dr. Parr. It is worthy of note that Lord Beaconsfield received his education at this school, where he remained till he was articled to a solicitor.

him say that he would make a bet that in four days he would repeat every line in a newspaper, advertisements and all, *verbatim*, in their regular order, without misplacing or missing a single word."

Lord Macaulay was proud of his good memory, and had little sympathy with people who affected to have a bad one. He was always willing to accept a friendly challenge to a feat of memory.

Accordingly, one day, writes Sir George Trevelyan, "in the Board-room of the British Museum, Sir David Dundas saw him hand Lord Aberdeen a sheet of foolscap, covered with writing, arranged in three parallel columns down each of the four pages. This document, of which the ink was still wet, proved to be a full list of the Senior Wranglers, at Cambridge, with their dates and Colleges, for the hundred years during which the names of the Senior Wranglers had been recorded in the University calendar."*

On another occasion Sir David asked:—

"Macaulay, do you know your Popes?"

"No," was the answer; "I always get wrong among the Innocents."

"But can you say your Archbishops of Canterbury?"

"Anyone," replied Macaulay; "could say the

* "Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay," ii., 205-6.

Archbishops of Canterbury backwards," and off he went, repeating them, drawing breath only once to remark on the oddity of there having been both an Archbishop Sancroft, and an Archbishop Bancroft, until Sir David stopped him at Cranmer. He could recite not only the whole of the "Paradise Lost," but Richardson's great prize romance, "Sir Charles Grandison," a work of prodigious size. Indeed, it has been truly remarked that "his mind, like a dredging net at the bottom of the sea, took up all that it encountered, both bad and good, nor even seemed to feel the burden."

The late Prof. Conington could recite the works of Virgil and Horace from beginning to end, and Thompson, after the fashion of Lord Macaulay, could tell the names, trades, and particulars of every shop from Ludgate Hill to Piccadilly, a feat, by-the-bye, which Fuller used to boast of doing.

Like Macaulay, Grote's memory was strong and accurate. No matter what the subject of conversation might be, he always threw light upon it by an apt quotation from either a well-known or obscure author. On one occasion, at his house at Barrow Green, the conversation turning on Dante, and one of the party present, himself an accomplished scholar, remarking that no English

writer of the seventeenth century mentions Dante, Grote immediately rejoined, "Don't you recollect the lines of Milton?—

"Dante shall give Fame leave to set thee higher
Than his Casella, whom he woo'd to sing,
Met in the milder shades of Purgatory."

At another time, when dining with his friend, the Dean of St. Paul's (Milman), the subject of modern Latinity was introduced. "One of the best specimens of modern Latin," said Grote, "is the Preface to Linnæus's '*System of Nature*,'" of which he immediately repeated whole paragraphs.

It was not sufficient for Sir George Cornwall Lewis to have a fine memory, unless it was well stored with knowledge. Hence, even, in his younger days he provided against the waste of any fragments of time, which circumstances might cause to be lost to him, by either learning by heart, or repeating in the intervals. On one occasion, writes his brother, "when I was waiting with him in the ante-room of a physician, he took a Horace or Virgil from his pocket, and gave it to me that I might hear him say a portion of its contents by heart, and he had repeated a large number of lines before he was summoned to his interview."* Hence, as Dean Milman has written,

* "*Letters of Sir G. Cornwall Lewis*," edited by Rev. Sir G. Frankland Lewis, Preface, viii.

he became "a man who not only might have aspired to the highest dignity in the State, but might also have done honour, as professor of Greek, to the most learned University in Europe."

Charles Darwin tells us that, although his memory was extensive, it was hazy, and in one sense it was so poor that he was never able to remember for more than a few days a single date, or a line of poetry.

Carlyle, who read omnivorously far and wide, had an excellent memory, which was, writes Mr. Froude,* "a magazine of facts, gathered over the whole surface of European literature and history." The multiplied allusions, he adds, "in every page of his later essays, so easy, so unlaboured, reveal the wealth which he had accumulated, and the fulness of his command over his possessions."

Equally powerful was De Quincey's memory, a description of which he has himself left us:—"Rarely," he says, "do things perish from my memory that are worth remembering. Rubbish perishes instantly. Hence it happens that passages in Latin, or English poets, which I never could have read but once (and *that* thirty years ago) often begin to blossom anew when I am lying awake unable to sleep. I become a distinguished compositor in the darkness; and with

* "History of the First Forty Years of His Life," ii., 417.

my aerial composing stick, I sometimes set up half a page of verses, which would be found tolerably correct if collated with the volume that I never had in my hands but once." He further adds how this "pertinacious life of memory for things that simply touch the ear does, in fact, beset me. Said but once, said but softly, not marked at all, words revive before me in darkness and solitude; and they arrange themselves gradually into sentences, but through an effort, sometimes of a distressing kind, to which I am in a manner forced to be a party."*

From childhood, Dean Mansel displayed a remarkable memory. When too young to be taught, he would often pick up portions of the lessons his sisters were learning, which enabled him to supply the passage wanted, if, when repeating their lessons to their mother, the girls were sometimes at fault. It was his father's custom to catechize the children of the parish in the church on Sunday afternoons; and when only three years old Henry Mansel insisted on standing up, and repeating the Church catechism with the rest. On one such occasion, "How many commandments are there?" inquired the rector of his infant son. "Ten," replied the child, immediately,

* "De Quincey's Life and Writings," H. A. Page, ii., 247-248.

and to the surprise of the catechist, added "Which be they?" Throughout life his memory served him well, and no doubt contributed much to his great success.

Gifted with a capital memory was Lord Plunket, on account of which he had the strongest disinclination to put pen to paper, and never transacted any business by letter that it was possible to do by oral communication. He often read his briefs whilst driving into Dublin from his country residence, and without noting them, remembered fully, and accurately, what he once looked over. An extraordinary instance is recorded of his power of extemporary reasoning, and of his retentive memory in analyzing and illustrating evidence entirely by his own unaided mental efforts. It appears that he was engaged in a very heavy case in Chancery; but his Parliamentary duties detaining him in England longer than he had expected, he did not arrive in Dublin till the morning upon which the case was to be argued. His junior employed in the case thus writes:—"I found him just starting to walk down to court. He asked me to accompany him, and to explain to him the nature of the case, as he had not had time to open his brief. I told him as much as I could, and also suggested to him the line of argument that had occurred to me.

All this time he had never said a word to me, and when the case was called on, I certainly expected that Mr. Plunket would have applied to the Chancellor for a postponement, which would, of course, under the circumstances, have been allowed, but, to my astonishment, he rose and stated the case, so fully and clearly—bringing out many of the points that I and the other counsel had failed to see in consultation, and so fully meeting the difficulties suggested by the other side, and so satisfying the doubts expressed by his lordship, that when, after more than an hour of this extraordinary exertion, Mr. Plunket sat down, he had so far established his case that all the efforts on the other side were in vain, and the Chancellor decided for my client without calling for any further argument on his behalf.”*

* “Life, Letters, and Speeches of Lord Plunket,” by the Hon. D. Plunket, 1867, i., 234.

CHAPTER X.

BRILLIANT TALKERS.

Edmund Burke—Lord Holland—Sir Charles Hanbury-Williams
—William Pitt—George Canning—Lord Chesterfield—
Horace Walpole—Lord Brougham—Sheridan—Samuel
Johnson—Steele—Addison—Dr. Parr—Porson—Jacob
Bryant—George Steevens—George Selwyn—Swift—Horne
Tooke—John Wilkes—Samuel Foote—Sir Walter Scott
—Lord Stowell—Lord Eldon—Lord Lyndhurst—Lord
Chancellor Hardwicke—Thomas Moore—Dr. Maginn—
Lord Byron—Curran—George Colman—Sir J. Mackintosh
—Sydney Smith—Douglas Jerrold—Charles Lamb—
Thomas H. Buckle—Lord Raglan—Bishop Sumner—
Thackeray—Theodore Hook—Samuel Taylor Coleridge—
Hartley Coleridge—Viscount Strangford—Lord Macaulay
—Dean Milner—Charles Reade—Archbishop Whately—
Leigh Hunt—Henry Fawcett—Norman Macleod—Carlyle.

ACCORDING to Rochefoucauld, "the reason why few persons are agreeable in conversation is because each thinks more of what he intends to say than of what others are saying, and seldom listens but when he desires to speak." This is, undoubtedly, in a great measure the case, for most of our brilliant talkers have been men who,

added to their natural charms and strong individuality, have infused into their talk that easy flow of language which, unstudied and free from convention, is the natural gifted expression of their opinion and experiences. On the other hand, others rarely throw aside the cumbersome garb of the scholar, but, with a self-consciousness that they are speaking, study to make their remarks as effective as possible.

In short, the best talkers amongst statesmen, diplomatists, and men of the world have been those whose conversational faculty has usually sprung from their character and intellect; the natural outcome of "the emotions, the animal spirits, as well as of mental gifts." Thus, as Johnson said, "Burke's talk is the ebullition of his mind; he does not talk from a power of distinction, but because his mind is full." The stream of his mind, it is said, was perpetual, and it little mattered what topic of conversation was started, whether architecture, antiquities, ecclesiastical history, the revenues, or prosecutions, for he conversed upon them all with the readiness and fluency of a master. Hence his brilliant talk made him one of the chief ornaments of any society he graced with his presence. And Wilberforce used no exaggerated language when he beautifully observed of his talking powers, "Like

the fated object of the fairy's favours, whenever he opened his mouth, pearls and diamonds dropped from him." When in ladies' society, he adapted his conversation to the occasion, and made it equally charming. Thus a lady, with whose husband he occasionally spent a day in Lamb's Conduit Street, London, has described him in the following terms: "His address frank, yet dignified; his conversation interesting and various; and particularly in female society, playful and amusing in a high degree."

Among the many well-known anecdotes told of his conversational powers may be quoted the following:—On one occasion, travelling through Lichfield with a friend, the two visitors took the opportunity, during the change of horses, to stroll towards the cathedral. One of the canons observing two respectable strangers making inquiries of the attendants, came up and offered such explanations as were desired. But, much to his astonishment, in a very few minutes, one of the strangers dazzled him with the splendour, depth, and variety of his conversation. They had not long separated when some friends of the canon met him hurrying along the street. "I have had," said he, "quite an adventure. I have been conversing for this half hour past with a man of the most extraordinary powers of mind, and extent of information, which it has ever been

my fortune to meet, and I am now going to the inn to ascertain, if possible, who this stranger is."

There to his no small surprise he learnt that his late companion, who had just set off, was the celebrated Edmund Burke.

In private life, Henry Fox, Lord Holland, was known as a delightful companion; "his wit having been playful and sparkling, his conversational powers considerable, and his temper agreeable, even to sweetness." It was only natural that, with such qualities, he should have been much sought after in society, and especially by his bachelor friends. But, after his marriage with Lady Georgiana Carolina Lennox, he was much missed by his former companions, and by no one seemingly more than by his old Eton schoolfellow, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, who thus pleasingly recalls the happy evenings he had been accustomed to spend in the society of his friend:—

Such are the nights that I have seen of yore;
Such are the nights that I shall see no more;
When Winnington and Fox with flow of soul,
With sense and wit, drove round the cheerful bowl.
Our hearts were opened, and our converse free;
But now they both are lost—quite lost to me.
One to a mistress gives up all his life,
And one from me flies wisely to his wife.*

* Jesse's "Celebrated Etonians," i., 38; see Sir C. Hanbury Williams's Works, ii., 60.

As a table companion, William Pitt is said to have been delightful, and Wilkes, in his "North Britain," tells us how, "by the most manly sense, and the fine sallies of a warm and sportive imagination, he can charm the whole day, and his entertainments please even the day after they are given." There is an anecdote told by Lord Sidmouth respecting Pitt's talent of improving a man's own sentiments uttered in the course of conversation, and returning them to him in bitter dregs. On one occasion, when Lord Sidmouth had dined at Pitt's house with Dundas and Adam Smith, the latter said to him after dinner, "What an extraordinary man Pitt is! He makes me understand my own ideas better than before."

George Canning, with his varied accomplishments and genial humour, could not fail to cause admiration in society. Those who knew him relate that his intercourse, in private and social life, was as attractive as his public career was brilliant and commanding. Sir Henry Bulwer, speaking of his oratorical powers, remarks that "it is but here and there we find a survivor of the old day to speak to us of the singularly mellifluous and sonorous voice, the classical language, now pointed into epigram, now elevated into poetry, now burning into passion, now rich with humour, which lashed into atten-

tion a talking and long-broken audience." Once more, it has been observed that "if eloquence is the child of knowledge, Canning was legitimately an orator, for his intellect was rich in varied and comprehensive learning. His distinct and accurate conceptions were expressed in clear and luminous language, illustrated rather by allusion than imagery, and betraying less the profundity than the appropriateness of his acquirements."

Like Lord Chesterfield, Walpole was a good talker, and the venerable Lord Brougham oftentimes took no small pleasure in the display of his clever and fertile conversation.

Sheridan's brilliant powers in company have long ago become proverbial; but, as already noticed in a previous chapter, his powers of colloquial entertainment did not make themselves visible till he was warmed by wine. But, when once he started, there were few who could surpass him; for his language and witticisms were those of a man who spoke without the slightest effort, his words being the natural spontaneous outcome of his inner self. Lord Byron, alluding to the charm of his conversation, once remarked, "I have met him (Sheridan) in all places and parties—at Whitehall, with the Melbournes, at the Marquis of Tavistock's, at Robins's the auctioneers, at Sir Humphry Davy's, at Sam

Rogers's—in short, in most kinds of company, and always found him very convivial and delightful.”

Referring to Johnson, it has been often observed that his conversation is the perfection of the talk of a man of letters. It has a style of its own, and “is an intermediate something between literature and conversation, in which it is impossible to separate the share of the man of letters from the share of the man of the world. His talk was not to be imitated, and had a distinct individuality. “It spoiled men,” it is said, “for everything that was not both weighty and smart. It was at once both gay and potent, its playfulness resembling the ricochetting of sixty-eight pounders, which bound like indiarubber balls, and yet batter down fortresses. Such talk could only come from a great, active, practical man. No mere scholar, no mere metaphysician, could ever have produced it.” The charms of his conversation were, unfortunately, a snare to Steele. Of a pliant and easy disposition, he was easily led into the way of temptation, and, as often happens, his fascinating talk, coupled with the poignancy of his wit, made him attractive and popular in society. Hence, as his biographer says,* “he was led into a course of the most reckless levity and dissipation, which

* “Memoirs of Sir Richard Steele,” Henry R. Montgomery, i., 14.

neither the strength of his resolution, nor the force of the religious impressions with which his mind was strongly imbued, enabled him to resist.

Addison's conversation was highly amusing, and, it is generally acknowledged, he was the best company in the world. Even Pope admitted the unequalled charm of his talk, and Dr. Young speaks of his "noble stream of thought and language" when once he had overcome his diffidence. It should be added that his sensitive modesty disqualified him for the rough give-and-take of mixed society, but gave incomparable charm to his talk with a single congenial friend, or to the ironical acquiescence under which he took refuge in large gatherings.* But it was one of Addison's own remarks that there was no such thing as real conversation, except between two persons. Few men, again, in their day, talked with more uniform vivacity than Dr. Parr, and no man said better things than Porson. Indeed, it has often been asserted that Porson would have been as great a statesman as he was a scholar, and many have regretted that his brilliant powers were not devoted to subjects which benefit mankind more than Greek criticism.

One of Jacob Bryant's charms was his power

* "Dictionary of National Biography," i., 125.

of talking. His conversation, we are told,* is described as having been "the happiest combination of instructive knowledge, of lively anecdote, and innocent fun. Enjoying a strong, though harmless, sense of the ridiculous, it was the bent of his quaint but quiet humour to convulse a whole company with laughter, while he himself sat with every muscle in his face unmoved."

George Steevens, again, the eminent Shakespearian Commentator, was gifted with the most fascinating attractive powers, which, when he laid himself out to please, rendered him a most delightful companion. Even Miss Hawkins, notwithstanding the "abhorrence" in which she tells us that she held his moral character, does not hesitate to do ample justice to his powers of language. "Such conversation," she writes, "could not be heard without interest, and much do I now regret that I did not then commit to paper some of its leading features."

Then there was George Selwyn, who, although a great favourite in English Society, was still more popular in the select circles of Paris; his conversational powers having been held in the highest esteem in the French capital. Eliot Warburton writes how "chief among the many distinguished individuals who honoured him with their notice was no less a personage than the wife

* Jesse's "Celebrated Etonians," i., 323.

of Louis XV. Here, also, he won the favourable opinion of Madame Du Deffand, to whom he subsequently introduced Horace Walpole."

As might be expected, Swift was a clever and admirable talker, one of his peculiarities being to make a long pause after he had spoken, to give anyone present, who was inclined, an opportunity of taking his turn in the conversation. It was his opinion that, in talking, "one of the best rules is never to say a thing which any of the company can reasonably wish he had left unsaid, nor can anything be well more contrary to the ends for which people meet together than to part unsatisfied with each other or themselves."

It is also interesting to note what company Swift singled out as presenting the climax of tiresome talk. "The worst conversation," he says, "I ever remember to have heard in my life was that at Wills's coffee-house, where the wits (as they were called) used formerly to assemble; that is to say, five or six men who had writ plays, or at least prologues, or had a share in a miscellany, came thither and entertained one another with their trifling composures, in so important an air as if they had been the noblest efforts of human nature, or that the fate of kingdoms depended on them." In other words, as the *Quarterly Review** remarks, "the conversation at Wills's assumed a

* 1855, Vol. xcvi., 24-5.

local, personal, and exclusive character, whereas good conversation, whether literary or not, is distinguished by its sociability, and being addressed to the world, does not bear the colour of what is peculiar and private in the individual."

The talking powers of Horne Tooke were of a high order, and according to common report, he never "appeared to greater advantage than in conversation. He was naturally of a social and convivial turn. His animal spirits were strong, the promptitude of his understanding was equal to its vigour, and he possessed an inexhaustible fund of anecdotes, which he introduced with great skill, and related with neatness, grace, rapidity, and pleasantness."

During his visit to Italy in the year 1765, being at an entertainment at which he appears to have been a stranger to almost every person present, the guests, on discovering him to be a clergyman, treated him, if not rudely, at least with coldness. But, in the course of the evening, he so completely succeeded in establishing himself in their good graces, that the party, highly delighted, and fascinated, by his conversation, insisted on seeing him home to his lodgings, accompanied by a band of music.*

A fascinating associate in society was John

* See Earl Russell's "Memoirs of Thomas Moore," vi., 287.

Wilkes, and, on his name being one day incidentally mentioned, Lord Mansfield said, "Mr. Wilkes was the pleasantest companion, the politest gentleman, and the best scholar he knew." Hannah More thought him "very entertaining" in conversation, and Charles Butler tells us he was a delightful companion. He abounded in anecdote and smart phrases, and, even in France, we are told, he was numbered among sayers of good things at a time when to make a clever epigram was to achieve fame.*

Samuel Foote seems to have been another capital talker. On one occasion, Lord William Bentinck invited Charles James Fox and others to meet him at dinner in St. James's Square, but they somewhat resented his being asked, imagining that he would only prove a bore, and a check on their conversation. In this conjecture they were mistaken, for, as Fox remarked, "we soon found that we were wrong. Whatever we talked about, whether fox-hunting, the turf, or any other subject, Foote invariably took the lead and delighted us all."

If not actually brilliant, Sir Walter Scott was pleasing in conversation, and according to Lockhart, was rich in ease, sense, and humour. Washington Irving relates an amusing anecdote

* See "Wilkes, Sheridan, Fox," W. F. Rae, 138.

illustrative of his jocose habit of talking:—"One morning at breakfast, when Dominie Thomson, the tutor, was present, Scott was going on with great glee to relate a story of the Laird of Macnab, 'who, poor fellow,' premised he, 'is dead and gone.'

"'Why, Mr. Scott,' exclaimed his good lady, 'Macnab's not dead, is he?'

"'Faith, my dear,' replied Scott, with humorous gravity, 'if he's not dead, they have done him great injustice, for they've buried him.'

"The joke passed harmless and unnoticed by Mrs. Scott, but hit the poor Dominie just as he had raised a cup of tea to his lips, causing a burst of laughter which sent half of the contents about the table."

For conversation, Lord Stowell had a high reputation, and, when surrounded by an "audience, few, but meet, he was one of the most agreeable and entertaining of men." As a rule, his humour was dry, his language was terse, and he would say much in few words. According to Mr. Surtees,* "to a lawyer, the greatest of all conversational treats was to meet Lord Eldon and himself together in a friendly dinner party of lawyers. Here, sure of deference and appreciation, each brother would playfully unbend after the labours of the day, talk one against the other,

* "Life of Lord Stowell," 142-3.

and narrate alternately professional anecdotes." Lord Lyndhurst often delighted in clever and friendly sparring at the dinner table, and Lord Chancellor Hardwicke appears to have been regarded as particularly pleasant company, judging from the testimony of Bolingbroke and other wits of the day, with whom he was in the habit of associating.*

As a talker, Thomas Moore made his mark in society. Sir Archibald Alison, visiting Paris in the year 1821, thus writes in his "Autobiography":—"I there met with Moore the poet, the only one of the great bards of the day whose acquaintance I had not hitherto had the good fortune to form. I was very much struck by his conversation. It was brilliant and sparkling in the highest degree, abounding in those Eastern images and poetical thoughts which appear with such lustre in his "*Lalla Rookh*" and "*Irish Melodies*," mingled with the quick repartee and rapid interchange of ideas acquired in the highest and most intellectual London society. It was easy to see that he was thoroughly a poet; perhaps a little spoilt by the adulation he had met with from the most intoxicating of all quarters, that of elegant young women of fashion."

* See "*Life of Lord Hardwicke*," 1847, iii., 500.

As a conversationalist, Dr. Maginn was known "for the liveliness of his fancy, the diversity of his anecdote, the richness and felicity of his illustrations, the depth and shrewdness of his truths, the readiness of his repartee, and the utter absence of anything like dictation to those who came to listen and to be instructed." Indeed, few men have excelled him in the brilliancy of his talk, which, we are further told, was "an outpouring of the gorgeous stores wherewith his mind was laden, and flowed on, like the storied Pactolus, all golden." He was highly gifted, and, possessing a deep knowledge of the standard writers of Greece and Rome, as well as an extensive acquaintance with the best authors in modern continental languages, he was enabled to adorn his conversation with the richest and most varied illustrations. Accordingly, as has been observed, "all he said was distinguished more for value than for tinsel, and he thought with Burke that the jewel of conversation is its tendency to the useful, and carelessness of the gaudy."

Lord Byron was a remarkable talker, and Shelley went so far as to say that "his more serious conversation is a sort of intoxication." On the other hand, according to common report, his gayer kind was most shrewd, witty, and lively. At the time, too, Byron lived there was

a vast deal of splendid talent in England, and he has given us, as the *Quarterly Review* says,* his opinion of all the great conversers of his day—"Curran, with his poetic and imaginative wildness; De Staël, with her sentimental glitter; Luttrell's elegant epigram; Lord Dudley's pregnant point; the convivial brilliancy of Sheridan and Colman; the fairy grace and ornament of Moore; and the abundant knowledge, the precision, and modesty of Mackintosh.

Equally great as a talker was Sydney Smith, of whom Samuel Rogers writes:—"Whenever the conversation is getting dull he throws in some touch which makes it rebound and rise again as light as ever. Among the numerous amusing anecdotes told of him, the story goes that one day a certain nobleman invited several first-rate talkers to meet him at dinner, when the usual rivalry ensued. Indeed, so much impatience was felt to lead the conversation that no one had time to eat except Sydney, who leisurely partook of everything handed to him. When he had finished his dinner he made some ludicrous remark, laughed at it immoderately, and at once set the table in a roar. Having gained the attention of all those present, he never parted with his advantage, but triumphantly led the conversation for

* 1855, xcvi., 29.

the remainder of the evening, keeping the other guests convulsed with the humour of the only man present who had dined."

Among further well-known men noted for their conversational powers may be mentioned Douglas Jerrold, who infused into his talk much clever humour and repartee, which rarely failed to arouse the most unbounded merriment. Thus, for instance, on one occasion, at a dinner of artists, a barrister present, having his health drunk in connection with the law, began an embarrassed and prosy answer, remarking that he did not see how the law could be considered as one of the arts.

But Douglas Jerrold suddenly suggested the word "black," and quickly, as may be imagined, threw the whole company into convulsions.

Dean Mansel, as is well known, was the life of every company in which he was found. "Full of anecdote," we are told how, "his ready wit and power of repartee, as well as of grave argument and sustained disputation, caused him to be much courted, whether for serious or genial gatherings."

For inexhaustibility few talkers of modern times could compete with Thomas Buckle. It is said he could keep pace with any number of interlocutors on any given number of subjects and talk

them all down, and then was quite ready to start afresh with the first person who proposed some new subject for discussion. Then there was Lord Raglan, whose charming conversation and perpetual cheerfulness made him a delightful companion, and much sought after in the society of his day.

Bishop Sumner was famed for his talking powers. During his confirmation tours his habit was to stay each night at the house of some friend, either lay or clerical, and thence on the succeeding morning take the confirmation in the neighbouring church. It was only natural, as his son remarks,* that a party of guests should be invited to meet him at such times, but he was always equal to the occasion, for as he adds, with "a large store of general information, and a well-furnished mind, he was able to hold his own with any competitor for conversational pre-eminence."

According to one anecdote related of him in the time of the second Lord Ashburton, he was staying with his chaplain at the Grange. To meet him Lady Ashburton had collected around her, as was her custom, many literary celebrities, and at dinner there was a conflict of wit among those well able to take part in the contest. On the following morning, when the guests were

* "Life of Charles Richard Sumner," 216-17.

assembling for breakfast, there was a universal agreement of opinion that the Bishop had on the previous evening carried off the palm.

"Only think," said Thackeray, "that we who are wits by profession should have been outdone by the Bishop last night."

Another good talker was Charles Lamb, and, according to Serjeant Talfourd, "his conversation was very pregnant with matter from his extensive reading, particularly on those subjects which were his hobbies. It would be no great difficulty," he adds, "in this book-making age to compile a volume out of the conversation of an evening or two spent in his society. He was a great humourist, even in his more serious opinions, and displayed at times a fund of drollery."

Theodore Hook's ability in conversation, it is said, was rarely, if ever, surpassed by the most eminent men of his day. As is well known, he not only excelled in wit, but was a master of smart, pithy sayings. It has been often remarked that memory and knack may suffice to furnish out an amusing narrator, but the teller of good anecdotes seldom amuses long if he cannot say good things. Hook excelled in both. In fact, we are told that "he could not tell any story without making it his own."

The name of Samuel Taylor Coleridge will

always rank amongst the most distinguished of those who have obtained a celebrity for their powers of talking. His unfixed and extensive mind, which grew wearied and impatient under the trammels of composition, found scope for its wanderings in the freedom of unrestrained discussion. Those who were fortunate enough to be admitted to the small society, in which he lived, did not shrink from spreading far and wide the fame of his extraordinary fluency and varied conversation. Indeed, it became, we are told, a sort of fashion to attend occasionally at the evening reunions which took place at his retired dwelling, his conversation having been described as astonishing by all who heard him. Charles Lamb used to say that he talked like an angel, and even those who came to converse with him were constrained to remain silent, and listen to the charming flow of his language.

Similarly, too, Hartley Coleridge was brilliant in conversation, for, possessing a mind of extreme refinement, his beautiful thoughts seemed to spring up without effort, and to be so many pictorial representations of his inner feelings.

The eighth Viscount Strangford, who was noted for his great conversational powers and varied knowledge, possessed a childlike simplicity of manner which made him beloved by his friends.

Of the many amusing anecdotes told of him, it is related how, at a dinner table, a loud-voiced and superficial man, who, while professing to know many languages, had barely mastered the philosophy of his own, said, after hearing Lord Strangford's explanation on an intricate philological question—

“Ah, you seem to have picked up something about it; but I should like to ask Max Müller what he thinks.”

With unruffled brow, and the quietest but most exasperating smile, Lord Strangford remarked, “Max Müller will send you back to me;” and, turning to his neighbour, he added, “He actually does not know why.”*

“Singularly effective,” writes Sir George Trevelyan,† “were Macaulay's appearance and bearing in conversation. Sitting bolt upright, his hands resting on the arms of his chair, or folded over the handle of his walking-stick, knitting his great eyebrows if the subject was one which had to be thought out as he went along, or brightening from the forehead downwards when a burst of humour was coming, his massive features and honest glance suited well with the

* “Lives of the Lords Strangford,” E. Barrington de Fonblanque, 286-7.

† “Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay,” ii., 205.

manly, sagacious sentiments which he set forth in his pleasant sonorous voice, and in his racy and admirably intelligible language."

One characteristic of his conversation was the facility with which he would introduce good things, his quotations being always ready, and never off the mark. Thus, during the Caffre War, at the time when we were getting rather the worst of it, tells Sir George Trevelyan, he opened the street door for a walk down Westbourne Terrace.

"The blacks are flying," said his companion.

"I wish they were in South Africa," was the instant reply.

Again, in conversation, people had never the need to think twice, and, with all his strength and energy of conviction, he was always delicately courteous towards others.

Whatever the company, and whatever the theme, Isaac Milner was equally at home. In the course of his reading, he had looked into innumerable books, had dipped into most subjects, and could talk with shrewdness, animation, and intrepidity on them all. It mattered not to him whether the subject discussed were a steeple-chase, or final perseverance, in short, he could explain with the same confidence the economy of an ant-hill, and the policy of the Nizam. Possessed, as we have already seen, of a ready and retentive memory,

and with an amount of broad humour which others might well covet, he made his presence felt, and compelled everyone else to enjoy it.

Indeed, as the *Edinburgh Reviewer** has remarked, "At Carlisle the Dean was the life of an otherwise lifeless amalgam of country squires and well-endowed prebendaries." At Cambridge, the master was the soul of dinner and tea parties, otherwise inanimate. In London he was the centre of a circle, ever prompt to render homage to literary and intellectual rank. He was no ordinary person. Furthermore, his great talents were his social talents, for he talked with the great and the rich, as one who was their equal in wealth, and their superior in worship. He talked, too, "with pugilists, musicians, and graziers, at once to learn and to interpret the mysteries of their several crafts. He talked with physicians, to convince them that their art was empirical. He talked with politicians to rouse them to the danger of Catholic emancipation." He was, also, the intellectual chief of his party, and the members of it resorted to him at Cambridge, there to dispel doubts, and thence to bring back responses, oracular, authoritative, and profound.

Brilliant, again, was the conversation of Sir James Mackintosh, and Sydney Smith, writing of

* 1844. Vol. lxxx., 296.

him, says: "Till subdued by age and illness, his conversation was more brilliant and instructive than that of any human being I ever had the good fortune to be acquainted with. His language was beautiful, and might have gone from the fireside to the press, but though his ideas were always clothed in beautiful language, the clothes were sometimes too big for the body, and common thoughts were dressed in better and larger apparel than they deserved." Addicted to reasoning, he adds, "in the company of able men, he had two valuable habits, which are rarely met with in great reasoners. He never broke in upon his opponent, and always avoided strong and vehement assertions. If his display in conversation had only been in maintaining splendid paradoxes, he would soon have wearied those he met with, but no man could live long and intimately with him without finding that he was gaining upon doubt, correcting error, enlarging the boundaries, and strengthening the foundations, of truth."*

According to Miss Braddon, Charles Reade was a delightful talker. "To have him all to one's self, as it were," she writes,† "in a long evening of discursive talk, drifting from one subject to another, was unalloyed delight. Would that there

* See "Life of Sir James Mackintosh," 1835, ii., 500-1.

† "Memoirs of Charles Reade."

had been a Boswell to remember and preserve all such conversations ! Deepest thought and strong originality marked all his ideas and opinions upon men and books."

Few men were more delightful in society than Archbishop Whately, and there was a peculiarity in his brilliant sayings, writes his daughter, which few have been able to seize. He generally put forth an anecdote, or a witticism, as an illustration of some important principle, or to give point to some carefully weighed and clearly stated argument ; but the majority of his hearers forgot the argument, and remembered only the anecdote or jest.

Equally attractive at all times was Leigh Hunt, whether in company or over the fireside. His manners were peculiarly animated, and his conversation was varied, ranging over a great field of subjects. He was generally ready for the more lively topics, or for the gravest reflections, his mode of talk equally adapting itself to the tone of his companion's mind.

Henry Fawcett had a passion for talk, and "was not one of those," writes Mr. Leslie Stephen, "who became tongue-tied at home. He would pour himself out upon all the topics in which he was the most deeply interested over his own table, when there were no guests, as freely as when he had other listeners."

Singularly attractive as a talker was Norman Macleod, and Principal Shairp speaks in the following high terms of his conversational brilliancy, even as a young man: "To see him, hear him, converse with him, was enough. He was overflowing with generous, ardent, contagious impulse. Brimful of imagination, sympathy, buoyancy, humour, drollery, and affectionateness, I never knew anyone who contained in himself so large and varied an armful of the humanities. Himself a very child of Nature, he touched Nature and human life at every point. What Hazlitt says of Coleridge, was true of him, 'He talked on for ever, and you wished to hear him talk on for ever.' I have met, and known intimately, a good many men more or less remarkable and original. Some of them were stronger on this one side, some on that, than Norman; but not one of all contained in himself such a variety of gifts and qualities, such elasticity, such boundless fertility of pure Nature, apart from all that he got from books of culture."

It was no easy matter for anyone to answer Thomas Carlyle, for, as Mr. Froude says, "his power of speech was unequalled, as far as his own experience goes, by that of any other man."

Mrs. Carlyle, in one of her letters, says, "it is my husband's worst fault to me that I will not or

cannot speak—often when he has talked for an hour without answer, he will beg for some signs of life on my part, and the only I can give is a little kiss.”*

Indeed, one of the best judges in London, when speaking of the great talkers of the day, remarked, “Carlyle first, and all the rest nowhere.” His talk was powerful and effective, and words “flowed from him with a completeness of form which no effort could improve. When he was excited, it was like the eruption of a volcano, thunder and lightning, hot stones and smoke and ashes.” He had, as Mr. Froude remarks, “a natural tendency to exaggeration, and although at such times his extraordinary metaphors and flashes of Titanesque humour made him always worth listening to,” he was at his best when talking of “history, or poetry, or biography, or of some contemporary person or incident which had either touched his sympathy or amused his delicate sense of absurdity.”

* “Life of Thomas Carlyle,” i., 383.

CHAPTER XI.

MONEY MATTERS.

Earl of Beaconsfield—Daniel O'Connell—William Godwin—
William Pitt—C. J. Fox—Edmund Burke—Richard
Cobden—Theodore Hook—Tom Hood—Sir Walter Scott
—Oliver Goldsmith—Steele—Sheridan—Leigh Hunt—Sir
Thomas Lawrence—Edward Miall—Lord St. Vincent—
Gainsborough—Warren Hastings—Josiah Wedgwood—
Marquis of Granby—Horace Walpole—Dr. Radcliffe.

AMIDST all their greatness many of our eminent men have been sorely tried by pecuniary embarrassments. One reason is that public life entails sacrifices, and only too frequently necessitates expenses, and even extravagances, which are a severe strain on the purses of men who have only moderate incomes. Thus the Earl of Beaconsfield, writing to Daniel O'Connell, who, by-the-bye, died poor, in the year 1835, excused his want of success in the election contest as follows:—
“I had nothing to appeal to but the good sense of the people. My pecuniary resources were limited.

I am not one of those public beggars that we see swarming with their obtrusive boxes in the chapels of your creed ; nor am I in possession of a princely revenue, wrung from a race of fanatical slaves."

On the other hand, if only rich men were to enter public life, the country would be deprived of the services of many men of high ability, whose talents must ever be powerfully instrumental in wielding, and moulding, the destinies of the State. As too often remarked, it must be remembered that men of high intellectual attainments have invariably proved themselves unbusinesslike in money matters, from the fact that their tastes and habits have drawn them from this practical side of life. But when we recollect how men of high and rare eminence, whose names will long be treasured up in the memory of the country, were harassed more or less by money matters, it must ever be a matter of regret that they were subject to such a disadvantage.

Perhaps if they had possessed only a small portion of the calm impertinence of William Godwin they might have fared very differently. As is well known, Godwin met the exigencies which the vicissitudes of business sometimes caused with the utmost composure, asking his friends for aid without scruple, considering that

their means were justly the due of one who had "toiled in thought for their inward life, and had little time to provide for his own outward existence." As an illustration of Godwin's conduct, Talfourd, in his "Final Memorials of Charles Lamb," thus writes:—"The very next day after I had been honoured and delighted by an introduction to him at Charles Lamb's Chambers, I was made still more proud and happy by his appearance at my own on such an errand, which my poverty, not my will, rendered abortive. After some pleasant chat on indifferent matters, he carelessly observed that he had a little bill for £150 falling due on the morrow, which he had forgotten till that morning, and desired the loan of the necessary amount for a few weeks. I was obliged, with much confusion, to assure my distinguished visitor how glad I should have been to serve him, but as I was only just starting as a special pleader, was obliged to write for magazines to help me on, and had not such a sum in the world.

" 'O dear,' said the philosopher, 'I thought you were a young gentleman of fortune. Don't mention it—don't mention it; I shall do very well elsewhere;' and then, in the most gracious manner, reverted to our former topics, sat in my small room for half-an-hour, as if to convince me

that my want of fortune made no difference to his esteem."

But the majority of men, lacking the amusing coolness of Godwin, have smarted under the galling inconvenience of poverty rather than fill their purse at their friends' expense. And, as already stated, one cannot but deplore that men, who in times past have served their country so wisely and well, should have been just as unsuccessful in their private affairs.

William Pitt, for example, was wretchedly embarrassed, and, it has been often asked, Why so? The answer is, to quote Mr. Morley's words, "that their minds were too much absorbed in public interests to have any room left for that close attention to private interests which must always be required to raise a poor man into prosperity." At the same time, considering Pitt's income, it is by no means easy, at first sight, to understand or to explain his enormous liabilities. Thus, from 1765, he was more or less involved, and in the year 1797 his debts were estimated at £40,000, including the mortgages of £4,000 and £7,000 upon his Holwood Estate. But by the year 1801 these debts had grown in extent, and upon an accurate computation were found to be no less than £45,064.

And yet his salaries had been high, and, since

the year 1792, he had been in receipt of nearly £10,000 a year. It must be remembered, too, that he had no family to maintain, and no expensive tastes to indulge. He had never, again, like Fox, frequented the gaming table, nor, like Windham, had to pay large election bills. Anyhow, therefore, with common care, he ought to have confined his expenses to about two-thirds of his official income. How was it, then, he got so miserably involved? The reason was, as Earl Stanhope says,* that "intent only on the National Exchequer, he allowed himself no time to go through his own accounts. The consequence was that he came to be plundered without stint, or merely by some of his domestics."

Having asked Lord Carrington to examine his household accounts, that nobleman ascertained that the waste in the servants' hall was almost fabulous. The quantity of butchers' meat charged in the bills was nine hundredweight a week. In similar proportion was the consumption of poultry, fish, and tea. The charge for the servants' wages, board-wages, liveries, and bills at Holwood, and in London, exceeded £2,300 a year. And, although this cruel waste of his income was gradually sapping his purse, Pitt could never find the requisite time to sift and search out such abuses.

* "Life of Pitt," iii., 341.

And, when at last he really felt the pinch of poverty, the great statesman was too proud even to utter a word of complaint to his nearest friends. On his pecuniary difficulties becoming generally known, it was proposed to bring forward in the House of Commons a motion for a public grant to him. Mr. Pitt refused to accept anything from the public, and added —

“Rather than do that I would struggle with my difficulties. If, indeed, I had had the good fortune to carry the country safely through all its dangers, and to see it in a state of prosperity, I should have had a pride in accepting such grant.”

He heard with considerable emotion of the King's offer of £30,000 from his Privy Purse, and also declined the City Merchants' bank deposit of £100,000. But ultimately a subscription of £11,700 was raised for him, by means of which the most pressing claims were discharged. In the following year Holwood was sold—his long favourite retreat—and we can imagine what a bitter pang this final wrench must have caused him. Thus, once he said to his friend, Lord Bathurst —

“When a boy I used to go a bird nesting in the woods of Holwood, and it was always my wish to call it my own.”

But in spite of all this kindly help it was found

that on Pitt's death, in the year 1816, his debts exceeded his assets by £40,000. These were paid by a vote of the House of Commons, which was carried unanimously.

"Never in my life," cried Fox, "did I give a vote with more satisfaction than I shall do this night in support of the motion."

Speaking of Fox, it was no matter of surprise, even to his most ardent admirers, that he was involved in pecuniary embarrassments, for, as already pointed out in a previous chapter, he was a gambler, and fond of horse-racing. Unluckily, habits of this kind soon emptied his pockets, and caused him to throw himself on the compassion of his friends. On one occasion, when a subscription was commenced without his knowledge, someone asked Pitt how Fox would take it.

"Take it?" said Pitt. "Why, I suppose that he will take it quarterly, or perhaps it may be half-yearly!"

In after days, with such recollections in his mind, it may be easily imagined what pain Pitt himself must have felt in resorting to the same, or nearly the same, expedient.

Edmund Burke, although a financier and economist of the first order, allowed his private affairs to fall into embarrassment. Lord Rockingham advanced him large sums of money, and at his

death directed that his bonds should be destroyed—these having, it is commonly reported, having been for £30,000. On the 1st May, 1768, Burke wrote to Shackleton:—"I have made a push with all I could collect of my own, and the aid of my friends, to cast a little root in this country. I have purchased a house, with an estate of about six hundred acres of land, in Buckinghamshire, twenty-four miles from London."

This estate was the Gregories, situated about a mile from that town. Now, as Burke at the time of his marriage was a poor man, this purchase has given rise to much controversy. It appears that the purchase money was about £20,000, of which £14,000 was raised by two mortgages. It had been suggested that Burke intended to meet his expenses by the profits derived from the speculations of certain members of his family—his brother Richard and his kinsman William having gambled desperately in stocks. But these two were ruined by the fall of East India Stock in the year 1769, and, curious to say, about this time we find Burke borrowing £1,000 from Garrick.

Henceforth he was always in the greatest need of money, on one occasion actually joining with William Burke in a bond for so small a sum as £250, and at times receiving help from

friends. He was not a man to retrieve his losses by carefulness, and went on living at Beaconsfield, "not extravagantly, but not frugally, driving four black horses, and spending £2,500 a year, exclusive of his expenses in London during the Session of Parliament." But his constant need of money is proved by his grateful acceptance, in July, 1788, of a gift of one thousand pounds from his friend Dr. Brocklesby. His want of money clung to him till the end, for when, on retiring from Parliament, he was informed that the King had granted him an immediate pension of £1,200 a year, he asked that, as his debts were pressing, this pension might be antedated to the beginning of the year—a request which was, of course, granted.

Again, just as Burke's genius was humiliated and impeded by the straits of embarrassed circumstances, so too Richard Cobden was driven to the most painful extremities by reason of his money difficulties. It was the same tale, too, as that of Pitt, his concentrated attention to public matters having been succeeded by the neglect of his own private concerns. Thus writing to George Combe, he says: "I assure you that, during the last five years, so much have I been involved in the vortex of political agitation, that I have almost forgotten my own identity, and

completely lost sight of the comforts and interests of my wife and children." But so much publicity was given to his affairs, "partly by the spleen of political adversaries, and partly by the indiscretion of friends," that they soon became the subject of general comment.

In the year 1846, as a proof of the public gratitude for his services in the cause of Free Trade, a sum of money was raised on his behalf, the bulk of which was employed in meeting the heavy losses incurred in his business, during the time when he was absorbed, in the agitation against the Corn Laws.* The remaining balance had dwindled to nothing on account of unfortunate investments, and, as years went on, his financial position ultimately became extremely serious. Writing to a friend, Mr. John Slagg, in the year 1869, he says: "My hair has been growing grey latterly with the thoughts of what is to become of my children. If I were to consult my duty to them, I should withdraw from Parliament, and accept some public employment, by which I might earn £2,000 a year. The present Ministry have, through my friend, Lord H—, sounded me as to my willingness to take such an office. But I see the difficulty of justifying my withdrawal from Parliament at the present time. . . . It is one of the miseries of a public man's life that he must be

* John Morley's "Life of Richard Cobden," ii., 285-6.

liable, under such circumstances, to have his private troubles gibbeted before the whole world."

In this painful emergency, a little group, says Mr. John Morley, of Cobden's most intimate friends took counsel together, and in the end a subscription was privately raised, which amounted to the sum of £40,000. The most touching part of this painful incident was his request that the names of those who contributed to this fund—between ninety and a hundred persons in all—might be given to him in a sealed cover. This was done, and after his death the executors found the envelope in his desk, with the seal still unbroken. There can be no doubt that this grand, noble-hearted man, through devotion to his country's service, sacrificed his own best interests.

Money matters proved to Theodore Hook far from a blessing. As is well known, he was appointed treasurer of the Mauritius in 1813, an office which he held till the year 1818, when the confused state of the accounts entrusted to his charge led to his being sent home by the Governor under a charge of defalcation. On his voyage back, he encountered Lord Charles Somerset, who, ignorant of his arrest, said —

"I hope you are not going home for your health, Mr. Hook?"

"Why," said Hook, "I am sorry to say they think there's something wrong in the chest."

But his friends rallied round him, and his cell in the King's Bench, where he was confined for a considerable time, often rang with loud and repeated bursts of laughter. Among the entries in his diary we find the following :—

“January 1, 1824.—I begin this diary under no very propitious circumstances, for I am in prison for a debt said to be due to the Crown for £12,000, incurred during my treasurership at the Mauritius. I never had any of the money, and I have already suffered the heavy process of extent, already been a prisoner for ten months before this. However, I shall not despair—*spero meliora*—and in the hope and belief that truth and justice will ultimately prevail, begin the year with a general forgiveness of all my enemies.”

Liberated at length, he began to write again, but soon his pecuniary embarrassments became deeper, and darker, every year. He managed to get through a vast deal of literary labour, but the utmost he could hope to achieve by all this was the means of parrying off one urgent creditor this week, another the next, while he knew that scores and scores remained behind, each waiting their turn to extract from him what he owed. Thus, to quote his own words :—“The wretched nervousness of a life of pecuniary embarrassment more than outweighs the unfair enjoyment of unjustifiable luxuries. Would an alderman relish

his turtle if he were forced to eat it sitting on the tight rope? Answer me that question, and I will tell you the sort of splendid misery which that man enjoys who spends his double income, and is indebted to his goldsmith, his tailor, and his coachmaker, not only for his dishes, his clothes, and his carriages, but for the privilege of using them at liberty." But Hook, like so many talented men, was devoid of business-like habits, and one might almost say of common sense, as a further entry in his diary, dated August 23, 1838, will show :—

"To-day not into town, but forcing myself against my inclination to write. A man who has been hurried into signing a paper, like that I signed last night, in the worry of other pressing business, by which I admit a debt of £800 which I do not owe, is not in the humour to write fiction. F. Broderip cautioned me to sign nothing without him, and I have signed this. The reflection that at forty-nine years of age, and with what everybody calls a knowledge of the world, and human nature, I should have permitted myself to be harassed into doing what even at the moment I knew was not just or right to myself, does not diminish the sinking agitation which weighs me down, and I verily believe will kill me."

But some men, like poor Tom Hood, seem to have been born to trouble, and that without any fault of their own. In addition to heavy trials, which did their best to cloud the sunshine of his happy married life, he had to labour under the disadvantageous, and depressing, influence of poverty. The failure of a firm not only involved him in severe pecuniary difficulties, but necessitated his living in the most penurious manner. He was an upright man, and his sense of honour prevented him passing through the Bankruptcy Court. Like Sir Walter Scott, he determined to wipe out every penny, instead of having his debts whitewashed over. Indeed, to quote his own words, "he had fair reason to expect that by redoubled diligence, economizing, and escaping costs at law, he would soon be able to retrieve his affairs." With these manly and noble views, leaving every shilling behind him derived from the sale of his effects, he voluntarily expatriated himself, and bade his "native land good-night." Accordingly, he fixed on Coblenz as the place of his new residence, and, dear lover of his country as he was—for he thought there was no land like England—he went manfully to eat the bread of sorrow in a strange land, determined to eat that bread honourably, and equally determined to get all the fun he could out of his lot, and the people

among whom his lot was cast.* Writing, for instance, from Ostend, he humorously remarks:—

“I am very content with my wittles in this here place, as the apprentices say.”

Referring to Sir Walter Scott's straightforward conduct in money matters, even despite his embarrassments, the following extract from a letter to his son, dated August 13, 1819, is interesting:—

“I beg you will keep an account of money received and paid. Buy a little book ruled for the purpose, and keep an account of cash received and expended. The balance ought to be cash in purse, if the book is regularly kept. But any very small sum you can enter as sundries, which saves trouble.”

On the other hand, how different in his pecuniary embarrassments was Oliver Goldsmith, his habits having been characterized by a reckless carelessness which incurred for him censure rather than sympathy. Indeed, he never seems to have realized the true value of money, and, we are told that such money as he had, might be seen lying exposed in drawers, to which his “occasional manservant” would resort as a mere matter of course for means to pay any small bill that happened to be applied for; and when a visitor

* See *Quarterly Review*, cxiv., 342; also “Memorials of Thomas Hood.”

one day pointed out the danger of this, Goldsmith exclaimed —

“What, my dear friend! Do you take Dennis for a thief?”

But poor Goldsmith from his early days had displayed the same weakness, and his life was one prolonged series of monetary difficulties, to escape from which—only, alas! to enter into others—exerted the wits of his best friends. Having contracted, however, the habit of wasting money as a young man, it never left him, and this was his evil genius through life. To quote one anecdote, it may be remembered that when twenty-seven years of age, bent upon leaving the city of Leyden—where he had been nearly a year without an effort for a degree—he called upon Doctor Ellis, and asked his assistance in some trifling sum. It was given, but, happening to pass a florist's garden on his return, and seeing some rare and high-priced flowers which his Uncle Contarine—an enthusiast in such matters—had often been in want of, he ran in, and utterly forgetful of his need of the money in his pocket, bought a parcel of the roots, and sent them off to Ireland. The following day he left Leyden with a guinea in his pocket, one shirt to his back, and a flute in his hand.*

* See Prior's "Life of Goldsmith;" also "Forster's Life," i., 581.

Steele's embarrassments have long ago become proverbial, and, as is well known, Sheridan, in spite of his brilliant talent, was always in a chronic want of cash. His friend Richardson went so far as to say that his whole character was influenced by the straitened circumstances in which he was placed; and often used to say that "if an enchanter could, by the touch of his wand, endow Sheridan suddenly with fortune, he would instantly transform him into a most honourable moral man." It has been generally maintained that, in his pecuniary dealings, Sheridan *meant* fairly and honourably; any failure that occurred in his engagements having been, as a rule, imputed to the inevitable pressure of circumstances. There can be no doubt that he was singularly deficient in regularity, his want of method oftentimes exposing him to being imposed upon by dishonest persons. Consequently, for want of proper care in examining accounts and keeping receipts, "the fraudulent dun was paid two or three times over, while the just creditor was left unpaid."

Of the many anecdotes told of the unpleasant *contretemps* which arose from Sheridan's want of funds, Haydon relates that when he "was Paymaster of the Navy at Somerset House, the butcher brought a leg of mutton to the kitchen. The cook took it, and, putting it into the kettle to boil, went

upstairs for the money, as the butcher was not to leave the joint without it. As she stayed rather long the butcher very coolly went to the saucepan, removed the cover, took out the mutton and walked away."

On another occasion Sheridan expressed his dissatisfaction with his servant for lighting a fire in the little room off his hall, because, he said, "it tempted the duns to stay by making them so comfortable." Despite Sheridan's hopeless embarrassments, efforts were repeatedly made to help him, and we read how certain American Government officials offered to bank £20,000 for him as a mark of their esteem for his services in the cause of liberty. But Sheridan declined the gift.

In the year 1804, as is well known, the Prince of Wales gave him the Duchy of Cornwall Receivership, adding, "I wish to God it were better worth your acceptance." Once more, there was a big pawnbroker in Wardour Street, who was insured for no less a sum than £40,000, concerning whom Moore thus writes: "It was found that he had been the person always supplying Sheridan for his deposits in this way, and that he now has a great number of articles of his, some of which—being Corporation Cups, etc., with their inscriptions—the family are about to redeem."

As the editor of the *Examiner*, Leigh Hunt got

into trouble in the year 1813 by this journal making an attack on the Prince Regent. He was imprisoned for two years in Surrey gaol, and ordered to pay a fine of one thousand pounds. This was a great blow to his prospects; and, indeed, it appears that from this time he was scarcely ever free from pecuniary difficulties. But in the year 1842 Mr. Shelley settled an annuity of £120 upon him; and five years afterwards Lord John Russell procured him a pension of £200. With his position thus materially improved, and his leisure considerably augmented, Leigh Hunt was now enabled to devote greater attention to his literary pursuits, and he produced some literary essays of remarkable power.

Although, says Allan Cunningham, Sir Thomas Lawrence "was found by booksellers and engravers to be, with all his courtesy, extremely skilful in the ancient art of bargain-making, and rather hard to deal with, for all his softness of speech," he was often in pecuniary difficulties. But, somehow or other, he continued to dissipate immense sums of money which he received in the course of his successful and profitable career. Although he would deny that he was extravagant, yet it is actually said that, at times, he was without sufficient cash to procure a day's maintenance for his establishment.

Throughout life Edward Miall was not overwhelmed with this world's means ; and, according to his son, had at no time a larger income than sufficed for his very moderate requirements. "Only after twenty years of labour," he adds, "was he able entirely to disencumber himself of all preliminary obligations to his friends, who had, with a confidence which was never abused, helped him to sustain the burden which his enterprise entailed upon him. But his admirers did not fail to express their appreciation of his services ; and, in the year 1862, he received an address, a piece of plate, and the goodly sum of £5,000. The late John Bright was present on this occasion, and spoke of deriving a pleasure from this event, which, he thought, had not been exceeded by that afforded at any other public meeting he had ever attended. He concluded by bearing testimony to Mr. Miall's character and influence, in language, writes his son, such as "it is rarely given to any man to receive from the lips of one so good."

Although an economist, both of money and time, Lord St. Vincent was yet liberal with both. According to his idea, the cause of a great deal of the distress and poverty in the world was to be attributed to extravagance. He maintained that most persons "want something, or fancy they want, either for themselves, or their children, or

dependents. Everyone lives beyond his income; and three servants are kept when there should be only two. If a man has a shilling a day he should live upon tenpence, and lay by twopence." He was always an advocate for ready-money dealings, and was indignant and angry when he heard of a naval officer being in debt. "They should live upon a ration, sir," he would say; "I have done it myself, and would do it again sooner than borrow money."

This was no doubt a capital maxim, and if carried out would save many a man from trouble.

But, it must be remembered, all men are not constituted alike, and whereas some are scrupulously careful, others are just the reverse. Thus Gainsborough and Warren Hastings—two men whose tastes were as far parted as they could be—were careless about money matters, and we know what an innate dislike Josiah Wedgwood had for keeping accounts. Indeed, he used to say that he had lost thousands by not attending to this department of his business. According to Eliza Meteyard, one or two old pocket-books bear evidence to this idiosyncrasy; containing a jumble as strange in its way as the pocket-books of Brindley. For instance, he will set off on a journey on horseback to London, and for the first few miles he will diligently record his expenses,

even to the penny he gives a girl for opening a gate, or gathering him a bunch of wayside flowers. Then he drops off into some meditation concerning mixtures, colours, or forms, and all else is forgotten. Some men, again, like the Marquis of Granby, have been profuse in their liberality, and others just as stingy, Horace Walpole, it is said, having made it a practice never to assist anyone. But, in money-matters, most men have had their peculiarities, and, while extravagance is at all times to be deprecated, one cannot agree with old Dr. Radcliffe, who, fond of money, used to maintain that the secret of making a fortune is to use all mankind ill. The many eminent philanthropists of the present century who, whilst living according to their high position in life, have striven to make the poor and the suffering happy by a wise and judicious disbursement of their wealth, are after all the most noble example of those whose money affairs have earned them lasting fame.

CHAPTER XII.

WIT AND HUMOUR.

Sydney Smith—Wm. Pitt—Canning—E. Burke—George Selwyn—John Wilkes—Lord Hervey—Sir C. Hanbury Williams—Stanhope—Earl of Chesterfield—Curran—Foote—Douglas Jerrold—Hogarth—Sir James Mackintosh—George Colman—Lord Ellenborough—Lord Chelmsford—Sir T. Coleridge—Rowland Hill—Archbishop Whately—Tom Hood—Charles Lamb—Norman Macleod—Dean Mansel.

“A WITTY man is a dramatic performer,” says Sydney Smith, and “in process of time he can no more exist without applause than he can exist without air. If his audience be small, or if they are inattentive, or if a new wit defrauds him of any portion of his admiration, it is all over with him; he sickens and is extinguished.” This, in a great measure, is undoubtedly the case, for the wit and humourist becomes such a favoured and spoilt child of society that any depreciation of his talent, or any sign of declining popularity on his part, has a tendency to turn his wit into sad-

ness, and his humour into seriousness. In many cases, it must be remembered that men of this stamp have been admitted to the society of persons their superiors in rank, wealth, and position, simply because they were amusing, having really, as it has been said, taken the place of the Mediæval fools, and "kept the table in a roar" by their mimicry and caricature. At the same time, the coarse-minded hostess, who sent her little daughter round the table at the second course, to request Theodore Hook "to begin to be funny," only vulgarly expressed what, in more refined society, was then expected of such men, although good manners may have precluded any such remark.

But the sense of the ridiculous has been specially marked in men of high eminence in other ways, and Wilberforce, speaking of Pitt, writes:—"He was the wittiest man I ever knew, and (what was quite peculiar to himself) had at all times his wit under entire control. Others appeared struck by the unwonted association of brilliant images, but every possible combination of ideas seemed always present to his mind, and he could at once produce whatever he desired. I was one of those who met to spend an evening in memory of Shakespeare, at the Boar's Head, Eastcheap. Many professed wits were present, but

Pitt was the most amusing of the party, and the readiest and most apt in the required allusions."

Canning, when necessary, displayed his powers of wit and humour, and having to contend against the most accomplished humourists of his day, he justly inquires, "Must wit be found alone on falsehood's side?" And having established himself as the champion of truth, we know what brilliant and useful arms he brought to her service. One of the happiest efforts of satire in our language was "*The Friend of Humanity and the Knife-Grinder*," in which Canning has ridiculed the youthful Jacobin effusions of Southey, in which he maintains, it was sedulously inculcated that there was a natural and eternal warfare between the poor and the rich.

Of the numerous laughable stories told of Burke's wit, it appears that in the debate on *Ways and Means*, in the year 1781, he ingeniously retorted upon Lord North, who said that Ministers were too poor to have taken any considerable share in the well-known loan of twelve millions. Burke said he wished Ministers would come in rich, and go out poor, but, unfortunately, the reverse was true. They came in thin and lean; but, like the weasel mentioned by Æsop, they grew so large and sleek that they were unable to get out again. He made the allusion in the most

ludicrous manner by stroking his own stomach, and comparing it with the corpulence of North, who had fattened amidst the calamities of his administration, until at this time, as Burke observed, like Shakespeare's Justice, in "fair round belly with good capon lined," his enormous and increasing proportions were the constant topics of mirth, even among his own supporters. No ordinary muscle, it is said, could resist the effect of Burke's quotation, and the significant action with which it was accompanied. The House was in a roar; and even Lord North's sides were seen shaking with suppressed laughter.

For the brilliancy of his wit no one could rival George Selwyn in the last century, many of his sayings having long ago become proverbial. But one or two will bear repetition, being masterpieces of their kind. When walking one day with Lord Pembroke, they were besieged by a number of young chimney-sweepers, who kept plaguing them for money. At length Selwyn made them a low bow, and said —

"I have often heard of the sovereignty of the people; I suppose your Highnesses are in Court mourning."

On one occasion the beautiful Lady Coventry was exhibiting to him a splendid new dress, covered with large silver spangles, the size of a

shilling, and inquired of him whether he admired her taste.

"Why," he replied, "you will be change for a guinea."

Wilkes's fame may be rested on his reply to Lord Sandwich, and his fling at Thurlow; while Lord Hervey, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, and Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, acquired in their day considerable reputation as men of humour.

Then there was Curran, of whom Lord Byron writes:—"I have met him at Holland House; he beats everybody—his imagination is beyond human, and his humour (it is difficult to define what is wit) perfect. Then he has fifty faces, and twice as many voices when he mimics. Being asked one day what an Irish gentleman, just arrived in England, could mean by perpetually putting out his tongue, he replied—

"I suppose he's trying to catch the English accent."

Lord Carleton coming into Court one day, for the purpose of adjourning it, his lordship, in lamenting the necessity, said—

"I am aware that an important issue stands for trial; but, the fact is, I have met with a domestic misfortune which has altogether deranged my nerves! Poor Lady Carleton" (in a low tone to

the bar) "has most unfortunately miscarried, and" —

"Oh! then, my lord," exclaimed Curran, "there was no necessity for your lordship to make any apology, since it now appears that your lordship has no issue to try."

Being on another occasion engaged in a legal argument, behind Curran stood his colleague, a gentleman whose person was remarkably tall and slender, and who had originally intended to take orders. The judge observing that the case under discussion involved a question of ecclesiastical law, "Then," said Curran, "I can refer your lordship to a *high* authority behind me, who was once intended for the Church, though, in my opinion, he was fitter for the steeple."

Among further amusing anecdotes told of Curran, it is said that on some one observing that no man ought to be admitted a member of the Bar who did not possess a certain number of acres of land, he inquired —

"Pray, how many acres make a wise-acre?"

Once, whilst cross-examining a horse jockey's servant, he asked his master's age.

"I never put my hand into his mouth to try," answered the witness.

The laugh was against Curran until he retorted —

"You did perfectly right, friend, for your master is said to be a great bite."

Remarkable for the brilliancy of his wit was Sydney Smith, instances of which shine forth in almost every page of his writings. Indeed, it was his rare talent as a table-wit that did not fail to excite the jealousy of many of his contemporaries; for it has been rightly said by Sir Henry Holland that "if he had not been the greatest and most brilliant of wits, he would have been the most remarkable man of his time for a sound and vigorous undertaking, and great reasoning powers; and if he had not been distinguished for these, he would have been the most eminent and purest writer of English." But his high ability exposed him to ill-natured remarks, and even Lord Byron speaks of him as "That mad wag, the Rev. Sydney Smith;" and Southey, in *The Doctor*, calls him "Joke Smith." But he could well afford to value epithets of this kind at their proper worth, especially as his pen never inflicted undeserved pain on any human being.

Foote acquired a high reputation for wit, and although Dr. Johnson disliked him, he acknowledged his power of humour. Thus, when one of the company at a dinner party at Dilly's called him a Merry Andrew, a buffoon, Johnson at once

declared that he had wit ; and added : "The first time I was in company with Foote was at Fitzherbert's. Having no good opinion of him, I was resolved not to be pleased—and it is very difficult to please a man against his will. I went on taking my dinner partly sullenly, affecting not to mind him. But the dog was so very comical that I was obliged to lay down my knife and fork, throw myself back on my chair, and fairly laugh it out. No, sir ; he was irresistible."

It was said to be impossible to take Foote unawares, and put him out. One evening, as he was telling a story at a fine dinner party, a guest, to try him, pulled him by the coat-tail and told him that his handkerchief was hanging out.

"Thank you, sir," said Foote, replacing it ; "you know the company better than I do," and went on with his story.

Among further instances of his wit, we are told how a lady one day said to him —

"I hear you can make a pun upon any subject ; make one on the King."

"The King," he replied, "is no subject."

On another occasion someone told Foote that the Rockingham Ministry were at their wit's end and quite tired out.

"It could not have been with the length of the journey," he promptly replied.

Again, when someone had joked him on what Dr. Johnson called his *depeditation*, he said —

“Why do you laugh at my weakest point? Did I ever say anything about your head?”

A very plain young man, of loose habits, happening to remark before Douglas Jerrold that he was fastidious, the latter quickly rejoined, “You mean that you are *fast* and *hideous*.” This is only one instance of the ready wit of this popular writer and dramatist, who was the life and soul of the society of his day, his company, we are told, having been sought with wondrous eagerness when a dinner party or social evening was contemplated. A writer in the *Quarterly Review*, some years ago, describing his talents, said, “In the bright sallies of conversational wit he has no surviving equal;” and a Club associate was equally eulogistic of his merits, who said of him, “He sparkled whenever you touched him, like the sea at night.” At the same time, it is recorded that Douglas Jerrold had an unaffected dislike to being considered and spoken of as a wit. “This wit,” it is added, “was the spontaneous result of his temperament, and of his marvellously quick perception of the relations between seemingly incongruous objects out of which it is engendered.”

Hogarth had a strong sense of humour, and it

may be remembered how Swift, in his "Description of the Legion Club," after portraying many characters with all the severity of the most pointed satire, thus speaks of this talented artist :—

How I want thee, humorous Hogarth !
Thou, I hear, a pleasing rogue art !
Were but you and I acquainted,
Every monster should be painted ;
You should try your graving tools
On this odious groop of fools ;
Draw the beasts as I describe them ;
Form their features, while I give them ;
Draw them like ; for, I assure you,
You will need no *caricatura* ;
Draw them so, that he may trace
All the soul in every face.

Sydney Smith tells us that Sir James Mackintosh not only had humour, but also wit. "At least," he says, "new and sudden relations of ideas flashed across his mind in reasoning, and produced the same effect as wit, and would have been called wit if a sense of their utility and importance had not often overpowered the admiration of party."

George Colman was noted for his humorous wit, of whom Lord Byron writes :—"If I had to choose, and could not have both at a time, I would say, 'Let me begin the evening with Sheridan and finish it with Colman.'" One day, when Colman and his son were walking from Soho

Square to the Haymarket, he was met by two young aspirants to celebrity, each of whom had sent him a dramatic manuscript. Being anxious to get the start of each other in the production of their separate works, they both called out —

“Remember, Colman, I am first oar.”

“Humph,” muttered the manager, as they passed on, “they may talk about first oars, but they have not a skull between them.”

This clever retort was not unlike one uttered by Douglas Jerrold, who, when two conceited young authors were boasting that they rowed in the same boat with a celebrated oar of the day, replied —

“Aye, but not with the same skulls.”

Lord Ellenborough, like many of our famous lawyers, was noted for his wit, although, it is said, he would occasionally use the oldest jests. Thus, when Randle Jackson, in a florid speech, began by saying, “My lords, in the Book of Nature it is written,” Lord Ellenborough interposed and said —

“Be kind enough, Mr. Jackson, to mention the page from which you are about to quote.”

When Sir Frederick Thesiger — afterwards Lord Chelmsford — was conducting a case, he objected to the irregularity of a learned serjeant, who, in examining his witnesses, repeatedly put leading questions.

"I have a right," replied the serjeant, "to *deal* with my witnesses as I please."

"To that I offer no objection," rejoined Sir Frederick. "You may *deal* as you like, but you shan't *lead*."

For the versatile richness of its humour the table-talk of Sir T. Coleridge will long retain its eminence. Indeed, his sayings, which have long ago become household words, were not only the outcome of a man of high intellectual qualities, but were supplemented by knowledge of rare merit. However humorous, too, his remarks, they generally conveyed an amount of wisdom which appealed to the thinking powers of even the most careless listener.

"Silence does not always make wisdom," he one day remarked. "I was at dinner," he tells us, "in company with a man who listened to me, and said nothing for a long time, but he nodded his head and I thought him intelligent. At length, towards the end of the dinner, some apple dump-lings were placed on the table, and my man had no sooner seen them than he burst forth with—'Them's the jockeys for me!' I wish Spurzheim could have examined the fellow's head."

Again, speaking of the difficulty of fixing the attention of men on the world within them, Coleridge remarks that "the largest part of man-

kind are nowhere greater strangers than at home," and further wittily says that "Some men are like musical glasses—to produce their finest tones you must keep them wet."

To quote an amusing anecdote, he thus writes : — "The other day I was what you call *floored* by a Jew. He passed me several times crying for old clothes in the most nasal and extraordinary tone you ever heard. At last I was so provoked that I said to him —

" 'Pray why don't you say "old clothes" as plain as I do now ?' "

"The Jew stopped and looked very gravely at me, and said in a clear, and even grave, accent— 'Sir, I can say "old clothes" as well as you can, but if you had to say so ten times a minute for an hour together, you would say, "och clo" as I do now,' and so he marched off. I was so confounded with the justice of this retort that I followed him and gave him a shilling—the only one I had."

Among the very many well-known sayings of Rowland Hill, it is stated how, on some people coming into his chapel to avoid the rain, he said—

"Many people are to be blamed for making religion a cloak ; but I do not think those much better who make it an umbrella."

Much of the extravagant humour peculiar to

Archbishop Whately—who has been styled the Sydney Smith of the Irish capital—was, it is said, “a stimulant deliberately applied to elicit laughter, which he considered a wholesome exercise tending to renovate the nerves relaxed in the progress of his often jaded life,” his motto having been “Cultivate not only the corn-fields of the mind, but the pleasure-grounds also.” But it would seem that this cultivation was often a labour rather than a luxury, for his hilarity was not always the result of happiness. Thus, as he once remarked, “Gay spirits are always spoken of as a sign of happiness, though everyone knows to the contrary. A cockchafer is never so lively as when a pin is stuck through his tail, and a hot floor makes Bruin dance.” And so, as we are told, it was with the Archbishop, for when he seemed most exuberant with his humour and quaint drollery, stab after stab was making sad havoc in his heart. Most of his sayings, published in recent years, have become almost household words—masterpieces, as they are, of clever wit. To quote one instance, it is related that one day a man directed the Archbishop’s attention to a valuable draught horse, as sagacious as he was powerful. Whilst enumerating its virtues, the horse-dealer remarked —

“There is nothing which he cannot draw;”

but, quickly inquired Dr. Whately, "Can he draw an inference?"

Poor Tom Hood was another striking case of a man who, in spite of long-continued suffering, amused himself and others by the exercise of his extraordinary imagination. He sadly and pathetically says of himself, "There's not a string attuned to mirth but has its chord in melancholy." Hence, oftentimes when others were convulsed with laughter at the richness of his humour, his heart was aching; and while his merriest sayings were cheering the sad and lonely, he himself was undergoing a terrible degree of suffering. And yet his wit was of the highest order, and as a punster he stands alone, one highly noteworthy characteristic of his effusions being that "He is a liberal warm eulogist as well as a glowing depicter of the good feelings of our nature, and the generous actions which those feelings prompt; and he is an unsparing satirist of vice, pretensions, and cant in all their forms."

Again, Lamb's sensibility to strong contrasts was the foundation of his humour, which, it is said, "was that of a wit at once melancholy and willing to be pleased." As one of his distinguished contemporaries has remarked, "his humour and knowledge both were those of Molière, of Carlier," who shook a city with

laughter, and in order to divert his melancholy was recommended to go and hear himself. He extracted real pleasure out of his jokes, and condescended to be a punster. Being told that some one had lampooned him, he said, "Very well, I'll Lamb-pun him." "His puns," says the same writer, "were often admirable, containing as deep things as the wisdom of some of those who have greater names." Posterity must ever acknowledge him a great humourist, for, even in his more serious opinions, he displayed at times a fund of drollery. In short, no one can read his literary productions without being struck with the vein of high intellectual wit that underlies them.

The sense of the ludicrous was a passion which seized Norman Macleod at the most unlikely moments. But it was a source of relaxation to him, for when "harassed by work almost to despair, worried by all sorts and conditions of men and women, then, as *per contra*, he would indulge in some humorous grimaces and apostrophes, give a grave touch to a ridiculous rhyme, or draw a series of funny faces."* Odd caricatures were, at such times, dropped into letters, even the most serious—sometimes as a heading, more usually by way of signature. On one occasion,

* "Life of Norman Macleod," ii., 217.

when he was enduring such violent pain that the night was spent in his study, and he had occasionally to bend over the back of a chair for relief, he wrote some humorous verses, on "Captain Frazer's Nose," from which we quote the following :—

O, if ye'r at Dumbarton Fair,
Gang to the Castle when ye'r there,
And see a sight baith rich and rare,
The nose o' Captain Frazer.

Unless ye'r blin', or unco glee'd,
A mile awa' ye'r sure to see't ;
And neerer han' a man gangs wi't
That owns the nose o' Frazer.

It's great in length, it's great in girth,
It's great in grief, it's great in mirth ;
Tho' grown wi' years, 'twas great at birth,
It's greater far than Frazer.

* * * * *

Gif French invaders try to lan'
Upon our glorious British stran',
Fear nocht if ships are no' at han',
But trust the nose o' Frazer, etc.

Painfully alive to the ridiculous was Dean Mansel, and it is said that "his humour was irrepressible, and the coming joke was to be seen spreading gradually over his face." This peculiarity was noticed by Bishop Wilberforce, who, observing an expression of profound thoughtfulness, remarked, "It is coming—I always know

that look. If you will wait a minute you will be rewarded with something delicious." Indeed, his features, his whole manner, indicated that he was about to say something supremely droll. And yet, it must be remembered, there was not in Dean Mansel any of that sarcastic bitterness which "makes certain utterers of *bons mots* the terror as much as the admiration of society. He was always good-natured, and good-tempered. His wit was purely intellectual, and its principal charm was that it was so spontaneous, so keen, so uncommon, and above all so unpremeditated."* Among some of the many anecdotes told of him, it appears that his friend Chandler, having played something on the piano, was requested to sing, which he declined to do. Another person pressed him, and said, "If you can think of nothing else, sing us the hundredth Psalm."

"No; I should only murder it."

This produced a third entreaty, whereupon Mansel, coming to his friend's rescue, said —

"Chandler naturally declines to murder all people that on earth do dwell."

On another occasion, it being incidentally mentioned that a man named "Fieldflowers" had just come up to Oxford, Mansel replied, "What a name! Why, he deserves to be

* See *Quarterly Review*, cliv., 26-29.

ploughed for the first half of it, and *plucked* for the second."

Once, again, he was dining in Oriel Common Room when a joint of lamb was being hacked at by the College "Dean," who certainly was not an adept in carving. Before long a lot of brown gravy, as large as a saucer, adorned the tablecloth, which provoked the ejaculation, "Filthy mess!"

Whereupon Mansel rejoined, "It's lamb-on-table."

Many of his witticisms were elicited by the political events of the day, and when the Liberal Government, although they suffered repeated defeats, pertinaciously stuck to office, Mansel was heard to remark that "Although the Ministers possessed in an eminent degree the Christian virtue of *patience*, they had yet to learn the grace of *resignation*."

But, after all, the instances which have been given above, are but as a few waifs and strays in the wide sea of the sayings of wit and humour.

THE END.

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